

SEE ALL **180** NEW STAR WARS TCG CARDS

EXCLUSIVE PROMO CARD INSIDE

STAR WARS **Gamer**

THE FORCE OF STAR WARS GAMING

ATTACK OF THE CLONES

THE SECRET LIFE
OF CHANGEINGS

GALACTIC
POWER BROKERS

JEDI SOLITAIRE
ADVENTURE

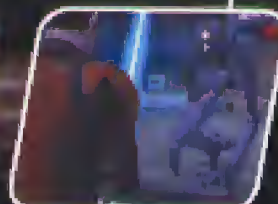
BOUNTY HUNTER PREVIEW

KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC
STAR WARS:

JEDI STARFIGHTER™

RACER REVENGE

STAR WARS GALAXIES



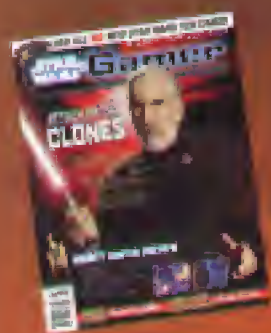
**MARA
JADE**

Timothy Zahn

**THE NEW
JEDI ORDER**

Greg Keyes





ON THE COVER: Count Dooku (Christopher Lee) is a foe to be reckoned with in the upcoming *Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones*.

STAR WARS Gamer

THE FORCE IN STAR WARS GAMING

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 4

ATTACK OF THE CLONES

CONTENTS:

Fiction

16 WAR ON WAYLAND

BY GREG RYAN

The No Luck Required lies powerless, floating air in the middle of nowhere. Will Udder Lockhart's crew survive? Part 41 of our exclusive The New Jedi Order—Emissary of the Void serial epic.

26 HANDOFF

BY TIMOTHY ZAHN

Despite her training as an Imperial's hand, even Mara Jade is tempted to help a lost kid manipulated by forces beyond his control.

Special Features

54 ATTACK OF THE BOARD GAMES

BY BOB DAWAU

Preview of and strategies for four of Hasbro's new board games celebrating *Attack of the Clones*.

74 MODEL CITIZEN: THE LARS HOMESTEAD

BY H.G. WALLS

One of the few places in the Star Wars galaxy where time seemingly stands still. A bygone-scale miniature.

Roleplaying Game

42 GALACTIC POWER BROKERS

BY JO WINTER

From the tallest spires to lowest maned, the cityscape of Coruscant is steeped in galactic power struggles.

48 STAR WARS ROLEPLAYING GAME

BY JO WINTER

New and current players alike can learn everything they need to know about the Star Wars Roleplaying Game revised rulebook. Includes a reference guide for adapting *Heroes and Villains* characters.

78 DROID STARSHIPS

BY OWEN K.C. STEPHENS

Just what were the scientists and engineers at CECIL Shipyard (ah, 887-142) (a.k.a. The Nerfworks) thinking when they started designing droid starships?

102 UNIVERSITY OF SANBRIA: THE CLAWDITES

BY CRAIG C. CAREY, JASON FRY & DANIEL WALLACE

Changelings, shapeshifters, skin-changers. See why species such as the Clawdites are feared and mistreated by the rest of the galaxy.

106 SPECIAL OPS: THE SHARPSHOOTER

BY GARY M. SARIN

It takes more than an infrared marksmanship scope and high-powered blaster rifle to get the job done. A steady hand, a keen eye, and this prestige class are a good start.

108 SPECIAL OPS: THE MEDIC

BY RODNEY THOMPSON

When blaster bolts start flying, you can count on your buddies to pull you out and the docs to put you back together. A soldier/tech specialist class combo.

Deck Plans

58 YOU'RE NOT A JEDI YET

BY MICHAEL G. RYAN

Learn to play the new Star Wars Trading Card Game. Includes a complete card encyclopedia for the *Attack of the Clones* set.

Adventures

84 JEDI'S LEGACY

BY S. JOHN ROSS

You are Nayan Loric, Jedi Master Niguen's Padawan learner. Can you save your Master—and all of Skulldon—from a diabolical enemy? This complete solo adventure requires no additional rules.

92 STANDOFF ON LERITOR

BY PETER SCHENKHOFER

Hostilities have never erupted in all the years colonists have inhabited Leritor, until the furthest Jedi is mysteriously besieged by a mob of angry Savras. A Star Wars Roleplaying Game adventure suitable for any mix of play.

State of the Arts

112 EXCLUSIVE! BOUNTY HUNTER PREVIEW

BY ERIC BRADCHER

Only Star Wars Gamer has this exclusive look at LucasArts' first PlayStation game starring Jango Fett.

116 KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC PREVIEW

BY EDDYOT CURRIE

This fall PC owners can explore the Republic 5,000 years before Luke, Leia, Anakin, or Obi-Wan ever did.

120 RACER REVENGE STRATEGY GUIDE

BY SCOTT SPENBERG

Turn it from your way through more than a dozen courses on five different worlds. In-depth strategy and track tips for this PlayStation2 sequel.

124 JEDI STARFIGHTER™ STRATEGY GUIDE

BY BRETT RECTOR

Get behind the yoke of the first Force-powered video game for PlayStation2.

128 STAR WARS GALAXIES UPDATE

BY HADEN BLACKMAN

Less than a year and counting until PC users start their new lives in the Star Wars galaxy. Start scouting out career opportunities now.

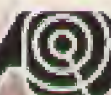
Departments

FORCE FEEDBACK	6
ROGUES GALLERY: CITY SLICKERS	12
JEDI COUNSELING	14
DICE, CAMERA, ACTION!	100
JEDI MIND TRICKS	130

—Michael Milkellian
Managing Editor

FORCE FEEDBACK

"It felt a great disturbance in the Force... as if millions of voices suddenly cried out..."



Locked and Loaded

STAR WARS GAMER • P.O. Box 707 • Renton, WA 98057-0707 • swgamer@wizards.com

This issue of *Star Wars Gamer* has something for each of the new games based on *Attack of the Clones*, as well as the features and departments you've come to expect. It's a must-read for anyone trying to figure out which new *Star Wars* game to play first.

We'd also like to say "thank you" to all of you who've been supporting us with your kind words and keen suggestions. *Star Wars Gamer* #9 has generated tons of great mail. Although it's a tough act to follow, we think this issue is even better. You be the judge.

Many of you caught a few of our *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised rulebook sneak previews, but no one noticed the biggest one: Not one, not two, but three, three tech specialist characters. (If you haven't picked up the revised rulebook, that's the brand-new heroic class.) Are you people actually *reading* the stats you crave so?

Michael Mikaellan, Managing Editor

In Search of a Master

I picked up my first issue of *Star Wars Gamer* just the other day. It had many good things I am going to use in my game. One point of interest I found in "Galaxy's Most Wanted" (*Star Wars Gamer* #8). It had Luke Skywalker's stats in there. It said that he was a Fringer 2/Jedi Guardian 13/Jedi Master 3. I have since tried to find where the Jedi Master class is and what special abilities come with it. If you could let me know, it would be most appreciated.

Glen Sanford
Savannah, GA

"Galaxy's Most Wanted" featured one of many of *Gamer* magazine's sneak previews of the upcoming *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised rulebook. That's where you'll find the Jedi Master prestige class, as well as full explanations of Luke's other Jedi abilities.

If you also picked up *Star Wars Gamer* #9, you'd find a few tech specialist characters

and stats for the Jedi Starfighter. To get the complete scoop on the new rulebook, turn to page 48 of this issue.



That is So Weeq(uay)

I have come across a small fissure in my *Star Wars* d20 universe. You have included those saucy little Hutl-buddies, the Weequay, in many of your adventure ideas and even some of the sourcebooks. I have looked in all of the source material and all of your essential *Star Wars Gamer* magazines, even in the indispensable *Alien Anthology*, to no avail. I would love to know what sort of attribute bonuses and penalties, languages, feats, and skills they come with... but I have a problem with conjuring them up out of thin air if these may show up later in a future supplement. Can you compare the stats you gave the Weequay in *Star Wars*

Gamer #8 ("Topside Infiltration") and print some comprehensive character rules for them? It would be greatly appreciated.

Bryan Steele
Lafayette, IN

When editing "Topside Infiltration" I had the same concerns as you—what are the Weequay's species traits and automatic languages? Upon closer inspection I found that, though there were Weequay characters in *Secrets of Tatooine*, these two things were missing. I did what every GM has to do sometimes—I winged it.

But you won't have to. In about a year, there'll be a book that will include, among many other things, the species traits and automatic languages for our leathery friends. If you can't wait that long, here's a preview. I must warn you, however, that these features might change:

Species Traits: +2 Con, -2 Wis, -2 Cha.

Automatic Languages: Sriluurian, Basic, and pheremonal Sriluurian.



Rebel-raising

First I want to say that your magazine is a blast and I hope you keep it up! But I was wondering if you could answer a few questions:

1. This is about some stats that Luke Skywalker had in issue 8 ("Galaxy's Most Wanted"). What are the feats Combat Reflexes and Attuned? And why does he

have an extra class of Jedi Master?

- Where are the stats of the XJ-Type X-wing starfighter and its history? It's been mentioned, but the stats haven't been seen.
- What happened to Dash Rendar and the *Outrider*? Xizor and Guri are mentioned and their stats have been given in the *Rebellion Era Sourcebook*, but there is no mention of Dash Rendar. What are his stats? What are the stats of the *Outrider* and his copilot?

Austin Corrales
Bemidji, MN

Let's get to it, then.

- Luke is always such a troublemaker. Like his Jedi Master prestige class, Combat Reflexes and Attuned are new feats added to the revised rulebook. If you're familiar with *Dungeons & Dragons*®, then you know all about Combat Reflexes. If

you're not, then it's a long story. The short answer can be found on page 51. Attuned is a new Force feat not unlike Alertness or Spacer. It gives Luke a +2 bonus to Enhance Ability and Heal Self checks.

- By now you have probably seen *The New Jedi Order Sourcebook*.
- See sidebar.



Faster, Schoonmaker

First, great allusion to the Russ Meyer film *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* ("Faster Starfighter! Kill! Kill!" *Star Wars Gamer* #8). Generally speaking, however, the organization of the article was confusing. Though it did follow the implied round sequence, the sections were not clearly delineated and self-contained.

I find the name Ramming Speed lacking, as ships moving this fast are not ramming anything. How about "Maximum Speed?" It wasn't entirely clear that Diagonal Forward move's 1-2 alternation carries from move to move. Establish Pursuit's text says that you must be in the same square, yet the example says the square behind. Which is right? And finally, a correction: The example on page 67 incorrectly states an X-wing (size Tiny) can be attacked by 25% of a Light Cruiser's weapons. The rule above specifies 10%.

Overall, this is a vast improvement over the current rules. Keep up the good work.
Sean "Schoon" Schoonmaker
Berkeley, CA

Our resident allusionist is Editor-in-Chief Dave Gross, and he certainly did his job coming up with that one. By now it's no secret that the alternative starship combat

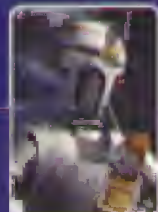
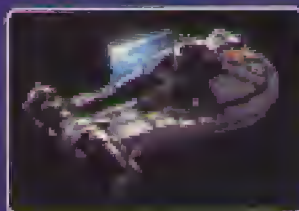


Dash Rendar: Male Human Scoundrel 4/ Soldier 3/Elite Trooper 3/Starship Ace 5; Init +2 (Dex); Def 27 (+13 class, +2 Dex, +2 Defensive Martial Arts); Spd 10m; VP/WP 122/16; Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (1d4+2, crit 20, punch) or +15/+10/+5 ranged (3d8, heavy blaster); SQ illicit barter, lucky (1/game session), precise attack +1, uncanny dodge (Dex to Def), starfighter defense, familiarity +2, starship evasion, DR 3 (armor); SV Fort +13, Ref +13, Will +8; SZ M; FP 4; DSP 0; Rep +5; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12. Challenge Code: F.

Equipment: Heavy blaster, combat jumpsuit, modified CEC YT-2400 freighter (*Outrider*), repair droid (LE-BO2Dg).

Skills: Appraise +4, Astrogate +4, Balance +6, Bluff +7, Climb +8, Computer Use +4, Demolitions +4, Disable Device +6, Gamble +8, Hide +9, Jump +5, Knowledge (organized crime) +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Pilot +23, Profession (merchant) +6, Read/Write Basic, Repair +4, Search +3, Speak Basic, Spot +9, Treat Injury +7, Tumble +9.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Heroic Surge, Martial Arts, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Skill Emphasis (Pilot), Starship Dodge (space transport), Starship Operation (space transport), Starship Point Blank Shot (space transport), Weapon Focus (heavy blaster), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibroweapons).



LEE-BO2Dg: Walking Maintenance Droid Expert 2/ Scoundrel 3; Init +1 (Dex); Def 12 (+1 class, +1 Dex); Spd 8m; VP/WP 12/10; Atk +2 melee (1d3-1, punch) or +4 ranged, SQ illicit barter, lucky (1/game session), precise attack +1; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +5; SZ M; Rep +1; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 15. Challenge Code: B.

Skills: Computer Use +9, Diplomacy +6, Entertain (comedy) +7, Gather Information +13, Knowledge (organized crime) +9, Knowledge (streetwise) +8, Pilot +9, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Binary, Repair +9, Speak Basic, Speak Binary.

Unspent Skill Points: 0

Feats: Ambidexterity, Skill Emphasis (Gather Information), Starship Operation (space transport), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Outrider

Heavily Modified Corellian Engineering Corporation YT-2400

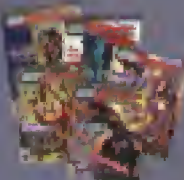
Class: Space transport	Crew: 1 (Unique)
Size: Small (21m long)	Initiative: +1 (+1 size)
Hyperdrive: 10.75 (backup 18)	Maneuver: +6 (+1 size)
Passengers: 6	Defenses: 21 (+1 size, +10 armor)
Cargo Capacity: 150 metric tons	Shield Points: 60 (DR 10)
Consumables: 2 months	Hull Points: 120 (DR 10)
Cost: Not available for sale	
Maximum Speed in Space: Ramming (10 squares/action)	
Atmospheric Speed: 1,150 km/h (19 squares/action)	
Weapon: Double turbolaser cannons (2); Fire Arc: Turret; Attack Bonus: +9 (+1 size, +8 fire control); Damage: 5d10x2; Range Modifiers: PB +0, S -2, M -4, L n/a.	

Back Issues

Log onto swfan.wizards.com, the official website of the *Star Wars* Fan Club, to order back issues of *Star Wars Gamer* (search for "gamer") and *Star Wars Insider*, as well as hundreds of other *Star Wars* products.

Almost Gone!

SWFAN.WIZARDS.COM has the last copies of *Star Wars Gamer* #1-5 available.



Star Wars Gamer #6

The Hunt is on! Dengar, Zuckuss, 4-LOM, bounty hunter weapons, Bounties to Die For, heroic combat tactics, Dark Horse Comic characters, Freelancer class combo, "Welcome to the Jungle" adventure.



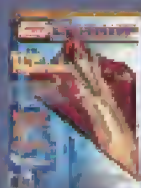
Star Wars Gamer #7

Living on the fringe! Huge Barty's Landing campaign setting and adventure, starships of the bounty hunters, "Secrets of Mos Eisley," Dilettante class combo, Vehicle Ace prestige class, and Jag Fel fiction from Elaine Cunningham.



Star Wars Gamer #8

The New Jedi Order! Vaynal Archipelago, "L'Yuzhan Vong," revised starship combat, the Priapulid, Sector Ranger prestige class, Mercenary class combo, 3 3/4"-scale Mos Eisley cantina, "Hive of the Infidel" and "Topside Infiltration" adventures.



Star Wars Gamer #9

Starships! Endor & the Modell Sector, create your own squadron, Aces of Wraith Squadron, run the Belt, the Nosaurians, Jedi Weapon Master prestige class, Battle Empath class combo, Rogue Leader and Galactic Battleground strategy, "Race for the Tessant" adventure.

rules in *Gamer* #8 were a sneak preview of Chapter 11: Starships of the revised rulebook. We strived to keep the organization of our article as close as possible to that of the chapter, which separates basic movement from starship combat.

As for your other comments: Ramming speed is not going anywhere, so to speak; Diagonal forward movement cost resets at the beginning of each round; and establish pursuit can only be attempted when two ships are in the same square, which solved the problem of facing in pursuit.



Go Figure

I just have to say, I love your magazine—from the first issue all the way through issue #9, which I just received! *Gamer* has also helped with my online roleplaying games immensely, from background characters to storylines, and on occasion a ship or two!

I love "Model Citizen." The 3 3/4"-scale cantina (*Star Wars Gamer* #8) was amazing! I would love to see more on that scale! I am a figure customizer, and I love to include the RPG heroes in my collection. Some of the offline games I've played in used action figures for combat. It really puts a third dimension into the game.

The article on the Wraiths ("Wraith Squadron," *Star Wars Gamer* #9) was fantastic! They have to be my favorite Squadron, and have been overshadowed by Rogue Squadron. The roleplaying stats were a great touch as well.

I hope we can look forward to more surprises like this! I'd love to see stats and short write-ups for the characters of the Dark Forces video games. Kyle Katarn, Jan Ors, BT-88, Jerec, and the rest of them would make great characters to throw into adventures. So far, with the exception of Jerec, everyone has been ignored. With the upcoming release of *Jedi Outcast*, this might be the time for it.

Ed O'Connell

Somewhere, Out There

Sorry, Ed. We nearly "bent our Wookiee" with that enormous model assignment. H.G. Wells prefers to work in the 25mm

scale. Check out this issue's "Model Citizen," and you'll see why we're willing to accept our 1"-tall fate.

For more on the exploits of Rogue and Wraith Squadrons, check out *Star Wars Insider* #59. It's got a nifty silver Darth Vader on the cover too!

I have it on good authority that Kyle Katarn (circa his last appearance in The New Jedi Order series) will appear in all his RPG glory in the upcoming *Power of the Jedi Sourcebook*. No word yet on the rest of the cast.



Emperor's New Lightsaber

First off, let me say that you have an outstanding magazine. I recently came off of an overseas deployment (I'm in the Marines) and bought my first *Star Wars Gamer*, issue #5. I then just had to have the rest. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to find #4. Now for the reason of my email: At the end of issue #5, in the "Next Issue" column, you have the header "Custom Lightsaber: Build Your Own," but in issue #6, there is no such article. Did I miss an issue between 5 and 6, or is somebody playing Jedi mind tricks on me? Any help in answering this question would be most appreciated.

Gil R. Machuca

Camp Pendleton, CA

You didn't have to be out of the country to catch that gaff. Gil was one of the many readers to point this out. We jumped the gun on that one: It sounded like a great idea, but when it came time to examine the goods, we discovered there wasn't enough meat to the concept to warrant an article. Maybe this next letter will soothe your disappointment.



Core Rules Blues

I'm a long time gamer, and I feel it's time to speak up. I've been hearing about a new printing of the *Star Wars* core rulebook. Is this really necessary or fair? I understand you wish to update the information for

Attack of the Clones. Can this not be done with a smaller book like *Secrets of Naboo*? *Star Wars* d20 is a good system, but does there have to be a new core rulebook for each new film?

Christopher Bravard
Lock Haven, PA

Christopher echoes what many readers have been asking since starwars.com announced the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised rulebook earlier this year. *Star Wars RPG* Design Manager Christopher Perkins explains it best:

"The *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* released a couple months after the 3rd Edition D&D core rulebooks and was somewhat overshadowed by them. With all the excitement surrounding Episode II, the time seemed right to release a deluxe edition that corrected errors and clarified rules from the previous core rulebook, incorporated feedback from customers, and presented a more visually dynamic layout. Finally, Wizards and Lucasfilm both felt strongly that the Episode II-specific content should be part of the core rules. Rather than force new players to buy two books (the core rulebook and an *Attack of the Clones* accessory), they get everything they need from the five feature films in one 384-page book."

Right to Bear Arms

I really love your mag. It has some really useful information and good ideas. I had a question about the Jedi weapon master ("Special Ops—Prestige Class: Jedi Weapon Master," *Star Wars Gamer* #9). The picture that was in the middle of the article showed a Jedi holding a weapon that I haven't seen before. I was wondering what it was. Can you print some stats in the next issue of *Gamer*?

Dustin Pietzold
Sedro-Woolley, WA

In the immortal words of a really swell ruler of the galaxy, "Everything is proceeding as I have foreseen." The moment *Gamer* Art Director Kyle Hunter unveiled Jeremy Jarvis's incredible illustration of a Kel Dor Jedi weapon master striking a pose after

San-Ni Staff

Cost: 500 credits
Weight: 2.5 kg
The San-Ni staff is a difficult weapon to use effectively. When deactivated, it is merely a baton about 50 centimeters in length. (Treat a deactivated staff as a club.) To activate it, grab each half, twist, and pull it apart. A 10-centimeter-long stun prod springs from each end of the staff, and two high-voltage power couplings crackle to life in its center. When activated, the San-Ni staff triples in length to 150 centimeters. It's popular among its few users for its discreet nature.

Stunning Grapple: If proficient with the San-Ni, you can use it to attack a grappled opponent, despite the weapon's Large size, and do not provoke an attack of opportunity when attempting to grapple with this weapon only. Each round you pin an opponent with a San-Ni, he suffers 1d4 electrical damage and must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or be knocked unconscious for 2d6 rounds.

Weapon	Damage	Critical	Stun/Fort DC	Type	Size	Group
San-Ni staff	2d6/2d6	20	DC 16	Energy	Large	Exotic

dispatching a battle droid army with a never-before-seen weapon. I knew you, Dustin Pietzold, would request its stats, so I have provided them here.

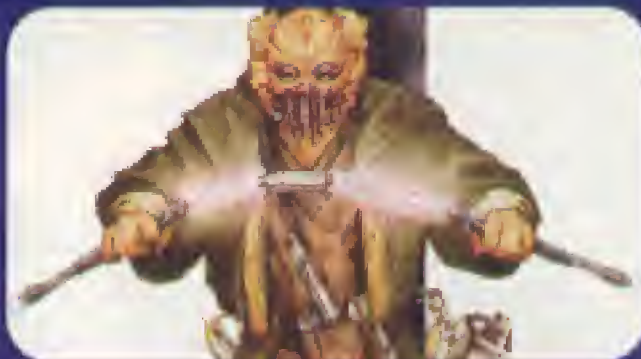


Mob Un Loo M'gecha?

I am not a RPG player, but I still love the magazine because it has so much else to offer. The short fiction stories are always awesome. I'll admit I was a bit bored with the article on the various planets of the Moddell Sector ("Endor and the Moddell Sector," *Star Wars Gamer* #9). However, "On the Wings of Rogues," "Wraith Squadron," "Callsigns," and the whole State of the Arts section more than made up for it.

I'm a bit confused. Somebody asked for one or two more stories to be added to the magazine, and your reply was "Na Goo," which means "stop" in Ewokese according to the *Star Wars Galactic Phrase Book and Travel Guide*. Being an avid reader, I would like to know if you meant "Den" (no) or "Chak" (yes).

Thank you for a wonderful magazine.
Julie Gilbert
Branchburg, NJ



We're glad you've been enjoying the variety of our offerings. This issue is no different in that regard. The answer to your question is, "Nokeetx," "Nobala," "Muawa," "Nyela," "Nosa," and "Den." ☐

JEDI MIND TRICKS SOLUTION

Each numbered answer is matched to its corresponding lettered answer.

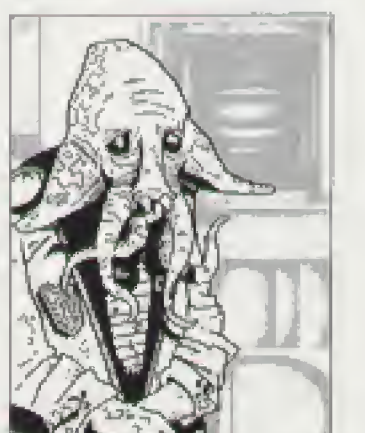
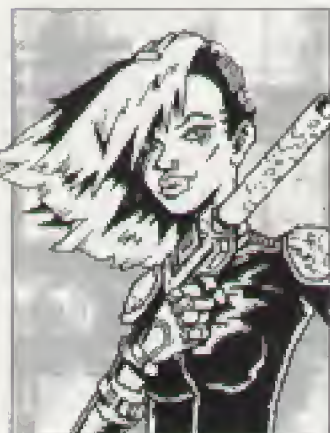
- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Endor | H. Drone |
| 2. Ewok | Q. Woke |
| 3. Sebulba | D. Baubles |
| 4. Solo | O. Oslo |
| 5. Rodians | L. Ordains |
| 6. Producer | A. Producer |
| 7. AT-AT | P. Ta-ta |
| 8. Yoda | S. Day-O |
| 9. Lloyd | M. Dolly |
| 10. Vader | R. Raved |
| 11. Prowse | G. Powers |
| 12. Droids | C. Sordid |
| 13. Cereant | J. Careens |
| 14. Ithorians | B. Historian |
| 15. Daniels | K. Denials |
| 16. A-wings | F. Sawing |
| 17. Mace | E. Acme |
| 18. Credits | T. Directs |
| 19. Beru | N. Rube |
| 20. Blaster | I. Stabler |

ROGUES GALLERY

City Slickers

ILLUSTRATED BY KYLE STANLEY HUNTER

Jungle planets and backwater spaceports are fine and dandy, but give me the gritty intrigue of a dense urban center anyday. Whether treacherous or steadfast, these characters have their own strategies for coping with the grind of downtown living. As the only staffer on since Issue #1, I celebrated this landmark issue. Dig some of my other sci-fi work, including my comic, *Swerve*, at superunicorn.com.



JEDI COUNSELING

Answers to Your STAR WARS RPG Dilemmas

BY JO WIKER

Can the Gungan Energy Shield deflect a lightsaber strike? It would seem to me that it can, yet the stats as presented in *Secrets of Naboo* only say it provides a +4 bonus to defense.

Technically, any kind of armor can "deflect" a lightsaber strike. Lightsabers don't cut through anything they hit—or rather, they can, but it takes more than just a strike. If you wish, you could rule that any time a piece of armor "stops" a lightsaber blow, the lightsaber attacks the armor, as per the rules for striking an object. However, that practice could get extremely ponderous after a while—so use that idea sparingly.

If it takes a full round to activate Master Speed, and it lasts for only one round, how do you use it? If it takes effect next round, then how does High Force Mastery affect it?

Using all of the Speed Force feats actually refers to the time during which you use it. Take a closer look at the language used: "Using this feat requires a full-round action." So, in effect, you can activate Master Speed as a free action on your turn, and it increases your base speed for the duration of the round. That being the case, neither Force Mastery nor High Force Mastery have any particular effect on it; the activation time is already as short as it can get.

If you wear a flight suit, do you suffer the -2 armor check penalty to your pilot and gunnery roles if you don't possess the light armor feat? Can you get a flight suit without armor protection and the penalty? Yes and yes. The standard flight suit—which provides a number of protections, as mentioned in the description—is actually light armor, so it requires the Armor Proficiency (light) feat to use it properly. That rule might be too restrictive, especially to lower-

level characters, so assume that a non-armor flight suit ("flight coveralls") costs only 250 credits but provides no damage reduction and only 1 hour of life support—though it still supplies the +2 equipment bonus to Fortitude saves made to resist cold temperatures.

Does the Search skill replace Spot and Listen if you're actively searching?

No. Search is the skill you use to carefully check over a 2-meter-by-2-meter area. Both Listen and Spot are either reactions (if the Gamemaster asks you to make the check) or full-round actions (if you are actively trying to hear or see something), but they both can apply to things much farther away than the range of Search.

If the situation is non-hostile and unrushed, can you take 10 on a Force skill check?

Certainly. The *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised rulebook spells out when you can and can't take 10 or take 20 in Chapter 4: Skills.

I am wondering about using Move Object on a blast door. The Difficulty Check for breaking open a blast door is 45. That is equal to attempting to use Move Object on something that is 5,000,001 kg or more, which is equal to a capital ship. That means the only chance a hero has of either opening a blast door or moving a Capital ship means he has to be 20th level, max out ranks in Move Object, and have an intelligence bonus of +2 or Skill Emphasis: Move Object. It seems a little excessive to me that a blast door is as difficult to move as a Capital Ship. If I make a skill check at a 45 and I can move the whole ship, I wouldn't need to open just the blast door. Do you have any suggestions for lowering the difficulty of open-

ing the blast door? I would love to see one of my players be able to just wave his hand and the blast door pull itself open. You seem to be confusing "open" with "break." Of course it's extremely difficult to punch a man-sized hole in a blast door with Move Object. Take another look at Table B-13: Damaging Objects, which I'm guessing is where you got that DC 45 figure. Note that this is the DC to damage the blast door; that's what the note at the bottom of the table indicates.

Simply opening the door—assuming it's not locked shut—should be much easier. It most likely weighs in at between 501-5,000 kilograms, which puts the DC at 25. If it is locked, though, that's a different story; it should be extremely difficult to open a locked blast door, even with the Force. You didn't see Darth Vader waving his hand and opening the blast door that separated him from the *Millennium Falcon* in *A New Hope*, after all.

Still, if that sort of feat of telekinetic strength is what you want to see in your games, consider dropping all of the DCs for damaging objects by 10 or even 20 as a house rule.

Is there a rule for attacking different scale opponents like in the 2nd Edition of the West End Games *Star Wars RPG*, such as a snowspeeder attacking an AT-AT? From what I see in the rulebook, a snowspeeder does 5d8 damage, and an AT-AT has a Damage Reduction of only 15. So even if the speeder does only average damage of 20, it will still damage the AT-AT, despite the line from *Empire*, "Their armor's too strong for blasters!"

The *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised rulebook includes some rules for scale, but not in the way you suggest. A weapon, in the d20 version of the *Star Wars RPG*, is a



weapon. Given enough time, a blaster pistol can cut through an AT-AT's hull. (Note that the operative phrase there, though, is "given enough time." Generally, AT-AT crews aren't willing to sit around waiting for enemies to chew their way inside and will obligingly open various doors and hatches—if only to shoot back.)

But don't take Luke Skywalker's hyperbole too seriously. Even though their shots were bouncing off the AT-ATs, it still took only two hits from the snowspeeders' double laser cannons to blow up the AT-AT that Wedge Antilles took down a minute after Luke made this pronouncement. Falling down obviously didn't render the armor inoperative, so the armor can't be all that strong. The DR 15 we gave to AT-ATs, then, is a reasonable compromise: a low roll with a double laser cannon won't scratch an AT-AT, but a good high roll can inflict tremendous damage.

Are ability score changes retroactively effective? In other words, if a character increases his Constitution or Intelligence and receives a higher bonus, does he get vitality and skill points for the previous levels when he had a lower score or does he only gain additional points for that and all following levels? How does this work with reduced scores? Does a loss of Constitution or Intelligence represent a loss of vitality or skill points per level? That is, would a 5th-level character suffering a -2 Constitution penalty lose 5 vitality points? Changes to Constitution scores are retroactive, but changes to Intelligence—in as far as skill points are concerned—are not. You recalculate vitality points every time your Constitution score changes. (This is the reason why the Wookiee's rage ability adds vitality points rather than Constitution.) You also recalculate modifiers to appropriate skills—for all abilities, including Constitution and Intelligence—if the ability score changes.

However, you calculate skill points only when you level up, and you never recalculate old skill point totals. Whether your character's Intelligence goes up or down, you're concerned with his Intelligence score

only at the moment that you're tallying up how many skill points he'll get that level.

Can someone clarify the way to calculate the Defense Bonus for an NPC who is multi-classed with two professional classes? As the rules seem to say, an Expert z/Thug 1 with no Dex bonus would have a defense of 8. That can't be right, can it? No, that's not right. The rule for taking a -2 penalty to Defense when multiclassing is for the heroic classes only. Thus, a non-heroic character who goes from expert to thug, as in your example, does not take the -2 Defense penalty. Nor, for that matter, would a heroic character taking on a non-professional class (for whatever reason); a soldier who took a level of expert wouldn't suddenly lose two points of Defense. Note also that characters taking on a prestige class also don't suffer the -2 penalty to Defense.

I've seen three separate write-ups for the Dark Lord in the *Star Wars RPG* rulebook, *The Dark Side Sourcebook*, and the *Rebellion Era Sourcebook*, and in none of these does Vader have the Throw Lightsaber feat. He is the only character in any of the films that has actually been seen doing this, yet he doesn't have the feat. Is there a reason he wasn't given the feat? Yes: It doesn't really help him all that much. It doesn't help anyone all that much, which is why the feat doesn't appear in the revised rulebook. All Throw Lightsaber does is negate the -4 penalty for using an improvised thrown weapon. Vader can certainly ignore a -4 penalty to his ranged attack bonus when aiming at a catwalk, which according to the rules on striking an object, has a Defense of 3 (a Huge object with a -5 Dexterity penalty). And that assumes he was aiming at the catwalk! If he was actually aiming at Luke—you can argue for either instance—then suffering a -4 penalty might explain why he missed.

At any rate, we felt that Darth Vader didn't need to waste a feat slot on negating a -4 penalty when there were so many other useful options open to him.

Gamemastering Advice

I'm a GM and can't think of a good way to build high-level characters. For example, if I wanted a 13th-level Jedi Master, what is the best way to put a character sheet together without starting at level 1 and evolving the character?

You have a couple of options. Certainly you shouldn't overlook the generic Jedi archetypes in Chapter 14, Allies and Opponents; with a little tweaking, they make great "instant characters"—which is, after all, why we put them there. Even if the character you need doesn't fall on exactly the levels listed, you can always start at the next lower level and build upward from there.

Another possibility is to search the Internet for character generators, of which there are many that will probably suit your needs. Most of these allow you to choose a character's species, class, level, and so on, and many even save a file in a stat block format for you. You might have to do a little searching and experimenting, but you'll almost certainly find one that will save you a great deal of time creating high-level characters.

Personally, I use a combination of methods. When the particulars of a character don't much matter—such as when the character won't be around long or the heroes aren't likely to interact with him via die rolls—I simply use a generic character. When the character is going to be important to the story, however, I take the extra time to develop the character exactly the way I want. It adds that "personal touch" to GM characters.

Got rules questions? Send them to:

Jedi Counseling
c/o *STAR WARS Gamer*
P.O. Box 707
Renton, WA 98057-0707

or via email to:
swgamer@wizards.com
(include "Jedi Counseling"
in the subject)



Emissary of the Void III

the war on wayland

BY GREG KEYES

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE HUDDLESTON



In space was about to kill Uldir Lochett and his crew in a most unpleasant manner. Although it wasn't the first time the void had tried to snuff him out—not by a gigaparsec—Uldir still had plenty of objections.

"We're losing atmosphere, fast," he muttered, combing his fingers through the switches and indicators at the helm of his transport, the *No Luck Required*. "But where?" His voice already sounded unnaturally thin, and his eardrums felt like they were going to explode. How soon before his blood started to boil?

Stop thinking about that. That's not helping.

"Where do you suppose?" asked Vega Sepen, his first officer, her eyes flashing like corusca gems beneath her platinum bangs. "It's not complicated. Your girlfriend jammed the starfighter bay open."

"Well, seal it off!" he snapped, returning the Corellian's glare. "And do not call her my girlfriend."

"Touchy," Vega said. "You shouldn't let one little spat bust up a good thing. I mean, she only sabotaged our hyperdrive, stole our only hyperdrive-capable starfighter, and left us bleeding air."

"Yeah? You sound jealous to me, Sepen," he snapped.

"Oh, yes, of course," Vega said, studying the system indicators. "I've got the big hurt for you, all right. I'm going to make my move as soon as you're out of diapers."

Her voice sounded weird. The falling pressure, probably.

"Boss..." Vega went on, in a more normal tone.

"What?"

"It won't seal."

"Sithspawn!" He raised his voice, trying to project it through the thinning air. "Vac suits, everyone, now!" He rose to his feet and found his legs wobbly. He suppressed a giggle as the situation suddenly seemed amusing. Was harder-than-corundum Vega Sepen actually jealous of the rogue Jedi? Vega was like a tough older sister—there had never been anything between them.

Nor was there anything between him and Klin-Fa Gi. She had been an irritating mynock on his hull from the second they met, and that was before she had tried to kill him and his crew.

Another funny thing, this one a real side-splitter. He was pretty sure he didn't have time to make it to the storage lockers before passing out. Why hadn't he thought of the vac suits first? Where was his brain?

Oh, right. Starving for oxygen.

He couldn't help it. He laughed at that one. The galaxy was the best practical joker ever.

He was still chuckling when he tripped over Leaft. The Dug had collapsed in a pile, his limbs sticking up at odd angles. His normally ferocious face actually looked sort of cute with no surly consciousness to animate it. And he had brought some blankets to curl up on, or was it laundry?

No, those are the vac suits, you idiot, some stubbornly rational part of Uldir snarled. You forgot. Leaft didn't.

His vision was blurring. He didn't have long. He put the helmet on first and twisted the feed valve, then started shimmying into the suit. The fresh air smelled good, but his lungs couldn't get much of it—not enough pressure, without a seal between suit and helmet.

A bunch of black holes suddenly appeared in the bulkhead. Yuuzhan Vong voids? Were they under attack, now, on top of everything else?

"That's it," he muttered. "I give up."

He did, too, as the black holes devoured the ship, the light, and finally Uldir Lochett.



He awoke to the hiss of air in his helmet. The flat face of a Duro was staring at him with concern. The Duro was wearing a vac suit. It took him a confused moment to understand that it was Vook, the fourth member of his crew. It took only another heartbeat to recall his last memories.

"Leaft, Vega! We have to—"

"Already done, Boss-boy," Vega's voice sounded tinny in his helmet transceiver. "We're all okay. Leaft's a little on the puny side—"

"I'm fine," the Dug snarled. He sounded more groggy than convincing.

"Good work, Leaft, going for the suits," Uldir said. "Next time, remember to put yours on first. Always."

"Hrrm. Basic training. Wasn't thinking straight, though," Leaft sounded chagrined, which was a rarity. "Thinking like a human," he added. That was more like Leaft. Uldir was relieved.

"Vook was thinking straight, at least," Vega said.

Vook looked embarrassed, but said nothing.

"Okay," Uldir said, wobbling to his feet. "Let's see what's wrong and fix it."

"And then?" Leaft growled.

"Then we go get our starfighter back and make a certain Jedi experience a great deal of remorse."



Uldir was with Vook in the engine crawlway, puzzling over the defunct hyperdrive, when Vega stuck her head down from above.

"We got the outer doors sealed," she said.

"And the inner?"

"Well, it's good news and bad news," Vega allowed. "The bad news is she cut through the inner doors with her lightsaber, so we're going to have to patch them. Leaft's on that. The good news—I guess this is good news—she didn't jam the outer doors on purpose. She banged the mechanism with the A-wing when she took off."

"Then she didn't intend for us to die," Uldir mused.

"Think not? So you plot she hasn't gone over to the dark side?"

"If she were truly rogue, she would hardly have any compunction about killing us. She could have torped us, for that matter, to make sure of it."

"I think you're still woozy," Vega said. "She stranded us in Vong space without a hyperdrive, twenty light-years from anywhere. She cut the hyperwave antenna, too, so we can't call for help. That in itself is a death sentence. A slow, cruel one. Very dark."

"Maybe she figured we could fix one or the other."

"She knew we were already in bad shape, that we needed supplies to effect repairs." Vega cocked her head. "Don't forget, she's on her way to Wayland. She must be after some of the Emperor's old toys. Even if she hasn't given in to the dark side, she must be right at the shatter zone."

"Yeah," Uldir assented. "I'll give you that. We just have to hope she hasn't gone over. At least the Jedi still have a few friends left. A Dark Jedi could lose them what little support they have. It would be all the hard-liners in the Senate need to make the policy of turning Jedi over to the Yuuzhan Vong legal."

"That could be the least of it, if she finds any of the Emperor's weapons," Vega said. "We know from experience how much damage a single Dark Jedi can do."

"Yes," Vook said softly, "but if that damage were to the Yuuzhan Vong, it is to be desired."

"Vook..." Uldir throttled his immediate retort. The Duro had lost his homeworld to the Vong. He was understandably upset.

"she stranded us in vong space without a hyperdrive, twenty light-years from anywhere, she cut the hyperwave antenna, too, so we can't call for help."

"I can't imagine how you must feel, Vook," Uldir said. "But the dark side can never be the answer. I didn't learn a lot at the Jedi academy, but I did learn that."

Vook blinked slowly and was silent for a moment.

"I can repair the hyperdrive," he said, apparently dodging any debate.

"You can?"

"Yes. She cut through one of the motivator-engine linkages. That's easily repaired. However, when we dropped from hyperspace, the resulting surge spread out over the rest of the system and fried the remaining motivators. I can realign the one good one to handle the engines, but only for two, maybe three jumps. Then it burns out, too."

"That's terrific," Vega said. "Can we make Mon Calamari?"

"Yes."

"No," Uldir said. "We're going to Wayland."

Vega fixed him with her steely eyes. "And just how will we leave, once we get there? Don't forget, the Yuuzhan Vong have a base on Wayland, too."

"We'll deal with it when the time comes," Uldir replied. "As it is, my last instructions from Master Skywalker were to bring her in for debriefing. That's what we're going to do."

"You're not thinking with your head, boss," Vega said.

"And that's enough of that," Uldir said. "It's not funny anymore." He turned to Vook. "How long until it's done?"

"Three hours, maybe four."

"Fine. Get to it. Vega, you'll help me get us as battle-ready as possible." He raised his voice. "Leaft, how are the repairs on the inner doors coming?"

"Faster if you'd let me work in peace," the Dug's voice came back over the Intercom.

Vega was still staring at him. Her eyes and the set of her frame told him she was unhappy with his decision. He didn't like to resort to pulling rank, if he could help it. It was always better when your crew agreed with you. But in this case he wasn't going to entertain any discussions. He would not, could not be responsible for giving a Dark Jedi even the slightest opportunity to resurrect any of the Emperor's old technology. Not even if it killed them all.



The *No Luck Required* dropped out of hyperspace with a bone-jolting thud. The inertial compensators whined and g-force tried to suck Uldir's brain out of his right ear. A great green world filled most of his view, far too near.

"Nice jump, boss," Vega said.

"What happened?" Uldir demanded, of no one in particular.

"We're lucky we didn't end up starfood, coming out this close to a singularity."

Vook answered. "The motivator failed during the jump," he said. "We are no longer hyperdrive capable."

"Well, at least you got us here. Good work, Vook."

"Yes sir," Vook murmured, and added,

"We're doomed now, sir."

"No we're not," Uldir replied. "I want you to start exploring options. See if you can cannibalize enough parts to put together one jump, to anywhere. Scan the system for any hulks we might be able to salvage from. Anything. Just get me one more jump, Vook."

The Duro's expression remained unreadable, but he shrugged. "Okay," he said.

"Boss," Vega said, "I've got three objects turning our way."

"Perfect," Uldir said. "What are they?"

"Coralskippers."

Uldir toggled on the Intercom. "Leaft, you hear that?"

"Yes," the Dug grunted. "I'm in the turret already."

Uldir flipped to long-range scanners. There were the skips, all right. Like all Yuuzhan Vong tech, the skips were living creatures, modified by advanced biotech into deadly killing vessels. Uldir had dealt with enough of the small furies to know that even one was a problem—three made for a very bad day indeed.

"It could be worse," he sighed.

"I've got a corvette analog coming around the planetary horizon," Vega said. "I estimate we have about eight minutes to handle the skips before we have it to deal with, as well."

"Ah," Uldir said. "So worse. Remind me not to say that again."

"What would be the point in that?" Vega asked. "You don't seem to be handling advice all that well these days, even your own."

"And you're plotting a course toward insubordination, fast," Uldir snapped, starting the ship on a series of evasive maneuvers. "Vook, we've still got full maneuverability?"

"In sublight, yes."

"Fine."

"Permission to speak, sir," Vega said stiffly.

"Vega . . ." he sighed. "What?"

"You don't need me here—you've got Vook for fire control and repair and Leaft for the turret. Let me take out a starfighter. Even the odds a little."

"That's a fine idea."

"Great." She reached for the buckles of her crash harness.

"Two minutes until maximum range," Vook said.

"Wait," Uldir said. "I meant taking a starfighter out is a good idea. But I'm taking it. You assume command of the *No Luck Required*."

"Boss, that's—"

"Listen to me. We can't slug it out with every skip in the system. Try to cover my exit with a barrage—dump some garbage, too, and I'll go out cold silent. Then I want you to get going—hide someplace, on the planet, in orbit running silent—whatever. Once I'm clear of the fight, I'll find Klin-Fa Gi, grab her, and bring her back."

"Right. Grab a Dark Jedi."

"I'm the only one of us with any Force sense at all," Uldir said. "So I'm the only one who even stands a chance of even finding her," he paused. "Anyway, I brought her on board. It was my decision to come after her. I'll take the consequences."

Vega looked like some nasty insect had stung her inside her mouth.

"I don't like it," she said.

"You don't have to. I'll find you, don't worry."

"One minute," Vook said.

"Rotate fighter two," Uldir said. With that, he left the helm and hurried toward the starfighter bay.



A globular bolt of plasma greeted Uldir as his A-wing cleared the fighter bay. He jerked reflexively at the stick—forgetting he was powered down—but he was still inside of the *No Luck's* shields, which the blast spread across in rainbow fluorescence. Gritting his teeth, he let the tiny ship drift in the cloud of released garbage. He watched as a spread of proton torpedoes from the *Luck* winked into silent fiery starlets, accompanied by a fusillade of energy bolts from Leaft's position in the turret. His finger itched on the power-up switch. Had the coralskippers seen his ship emerge and targeted him specifically, or was the near-miss merely coincidence? He would know in a few seconds. He had drifted clear of the shields, now, and though the A-wing had many non-factory modifications, its shields were not upgraded. A single solid hit and he wasn't merely out of the action, he was dead.

But the skips were too busy to notice him, thanks to his crew. One was already carrying a livid wound where one of Leaft's lasers had singed along the yorik coral, heating it to incandescence. As he watched, another took the fringe blast of proton torp. For a moment, he thought the fight would be over quickly.

No such luck. He watched, drifting and feeling helpless as the skips closed to their most effective range and the tables turned. Leaft still needled at them with deadly accuracy, but the shots stopped dead in space meters from the organic starfighters. The Yuuzhan Vong ships didn't have shields as such—instead, the same

dovin basals that furnished their gravitic drive opened tiny singularities which swallowed anything they touched—concussion missiles, torps—even the coherent light and particles of a blaster bolt vanished into them without a trace. They had their limits of course, and Republic pilots had learned a trick or two about slipping the occasional shot through those gravitic defenses, but it was no easy going. Meanwhile, the skips bombarded the *No Luck Required* with gobs of supercharged plasma, fired from what look for all the world like miniature volcanos set in the rough surface of the coralskippers. Now they avoided the arc of the turret gun, diving in close. Vega couldn't effectively fire missiles from that range, both because she wasn't likely to hit and because the resulting concussion would damage the transport as well.

"Go, Vega, go!" He muttered. "What are you waiting for?"

But then the *Luck's* drive kicked on and a stream of hot ions engulfed one of the coralskippers, whose pilot had clearly forgotten that an ion drive made an effective if short-range weapon in itself. The voids couldn't swallow all of that. The skip flared orange, yellow, blue—and was gone.

"That's it!" Uldir muttered, watching the *No Luck Required* dwindle with astonishing speed. The remaining skips went after her, of course, though they had little chance of catching her if she didn't let them. Unless the Vong fighters were hyperdrive capable, which he didn't think they were.

The corvette analog probably was, but it wouldn't go faster-than-light until it was a little farther from the planet. But if they spotted him . . .

He resisted holding his breath as the larger ship cruised by only eight kilometers off his lower starboard. If it noticed him, it gave no indication.

New light caught his eye, as some of the junk ejected with him hit Wayland's outer atmosphere and began to burn. One eye still on the passing cruiser, he reached for his stick. It wouldn't do for him to hit the atmosphere wrong. Too shallow an angle and he'd skip off into space. Too steep and he'd be incinerated. Time for a little course correction.

He didn't bring the ship to full power, instead firing maneuvering thrusters from independent power sources. That steepened his approach. He reached for the stick—and gaped at what he saw on his sensors.

Three little blips, launched from the cruiser, all headed his way.

So they had been watching the jettisoned junk, and he had revealed himself.

No use cursing the void, his grandmother used to say. It'll get you in the end, and you might as well be on good terms. He went to full power, dropped his nose, and dove planetward. The skips accelerated after him.

"That's right fellows," Uldir grunted. "Bring those flying rocks into the soup with me."

He bumped through high-altitude clouds of ice crystals that shattered the light from Wayland's primary into rainbow and diamond. He flattened his descent a little, noting that the less aerodynamic coralskippers were dropping behind his speedier ship. Their weapons, effective enough in space, lost range in atmosphere. He could probably outrun them easily enough.

He rolled into a tight turn. He couldn't afford to take that chance—he could outdistance the skips, all right, but they could keep him spotted until craft more apt for atmosphere could vector in on him. Uldir had met a few of their fliers, and some were pretty nasty. If he didn't want to have to deal with fighting the Vong the whole time he was searching for Klin-Fa Gi, he'd better do something about this now.

He aimed his prow at the coralskippers as they hit the turbulence he'd just passed through. He opened up with laser cannons, not really thinking to do much damage at this range, but hoping the brief opening and closing of their voids would roughen the air around them and sap some of their energy reserves. When he was in range, he gave them the present he'd been planning on—a concussion missile. The weapon was one of his own modification, equipped with a gravitometric sensor. As soon as it sensed a void, it would go.

It blew some ten meters from the lead skip. At such short range, in an atmosphere, a concussion missile had considerable authority, expanding air in a supersonic sphere that slapped the lead coralskipper back the way it had come. The other two had begun peeling away, but not far enough, and both went tumbling. Uldir braced for the milder jolt when the wavefront reached him and began using his laser cannons in earnest, slinging one of the tumbling skips. From his peripheral vision he noted the lead skip falling planetward,

it wasn't long before Uldir found evidence that he was indeed following the Jedi and not some strange and clumsy beast.

apparently unchecked by its gravitic drive. The third skip he could no longer see, but instinct told him he had a few seconds before it picked up his tail.

Yellow plumes of vaporizing coral sent the skip ahead of him pitching and yawing, making it more difficult to hit, but it didn't seem to be using its voids at all. He almost had a solid lock, but that's when the warning in his head went off—time was up. He yanked on the stick up and port—and felt blood rush to his head. He'd been right—streamers of plasma boiled by where he'd been. He tightened into a loop. Both skips were below him, now. He noticed with satisfaction that the fire from the one behind him had struck its brother a glancing blow, and it was burning.

Almost laconically, Uldir drilled the final skip and then sprinted toward the forest far, far below.



When he was a few meters above the treetops he leveled out and called up a map of the planet. It was well detailed, but few features were actually named. One of them was a dot in the northern hemisphere on the big continent labeled "Mount Tantiss." Wayland had been the Emperor's secret for many years, listed on no star chart due to—of all things—an ancient clerical error. Mount Tantiss had been his arcanum and storehouse. Grand Admiral Thrawn had

tracked the planet and the mountain down after the Emperor's demise, bent on finding weapons that would help him reclaim what the Empire had lost. Later, Master Skywalker and some of the other heroes of the Rebellion had found it as well and destroyed the mountain with a seismic explosion.

If Klin-Fa Gi was really a Dark Jedi, the ruins of Mount Tantiss were probably where she was headed.

He brought up the transponder overlay. Not surprisingly, it confirmed his suspicions—the A-wing seemed to be motionless on exactly that spot. Grimly he changed his heading to take him there, keeping a wary eye on long-range sensors.



Uldir found the A-wing abandoned and hidden by a makeshift covering of huge leaves fallen from the canopy above. He took a deep breath, listening, watching, and smelling the jungle around him, trying to reach out with the limited force ability he commanded.

From above, Wayland had looked much like Yavin 4, where he had attended the Jedi academy. Here, on the ground, the similarities seemed superficial. Although both Wayland and Yavin's moon had land masses covered mostly in jungle, Wayland's rose higher and stratified into two canopies. The air of Yavin 4 had been

spiced with the scent of blueleaf. Here the atmosphere lay heavily on the forest floor, musky and ripe with decay, whirring, buzzing, and click-clackering with the sounds of unfamiliar fauna. He remembered how dangerous the jungles of Yavin 4 had been, and there he had known something of what to

expect. This world he did not know at all. The sounds around him might be harmless insects or the Wayland equivalent of Yavin's piranha beetles, which could strip a person to the bone in the time it took a Toydarian to beat its wings.

Still, he was pleased to discover that Klin-Fa Gi seemed even more out of her element here—her trail of scuffed leaf litter and bent or broken understory was easy enough for him to pick up. It led, as he suspected, up through the foothills surrounding what had once been Mount Tantiss. Somberly, he shouldered a survival pack, his blaster, and a few concussion grenades and set off after her.

At least, he hoped it was her.

It wasn't long before Uldir found evidence that he was indeed following the Jedi and not some strange and clumsy beast. Unfortunately, that evidence came in the form of the five corpses—sentients, by the look of them, two different species. Neither of the species were Yuuzhan Vong, which meant they were probably locals. Whoever they were, they had been killed by a lightsaber—few weapons left the same distinct, cauterized slashes as a Jedi's signature weapon.

Grimly, he studied the scene for details. Three of the dead were of a tall, ectomorphic species with six limbs, of which four apparently functioned as arms. They had flexible snouts and their skin—where bare of the hides and bone ornaments they wore—glistened like an insect's carapace.

The other two were squat, powerful in appearance, and naturally armored with bony plates on their rounded backs. Like those they lay beside, they seemed to have been basically bipedal.

Uldir had never seen either species before, not in the space lanes or among slaves that the Yuuzhan Vong used as stock troops. That wasn't surprising—there were plenty of beings in the galaxy who weren't space-going, either because they didn't have the technology or the inclination, and he remembered from his all-too-brief scan of the files on this planet that it was supposed to have several intelligent species, all at an essentially stone-age level of technology.

When he saw what they gripped in their dead hands, however, Uldir's blood ran cold. Now he understood something about why they had died. At first glance, their weapons resembled clubs, spatulate on one end and pointed on the other, about thirty centimeters in length. Uldir had seen such weapons before, but even if he hadn't he would have noted something strange in the way that they slowly wriggled, flexing from side to side like Hothan glacier worms. They were alive, and unmistakably of Yuuzhan Vong biofacture.

He studied the bodies more carefully, searching for other signs of the Yuuzhan Vong, wondering if these creatures had been slaves or willing allies. He found no sign of the coral implants the invaders used to control unwilling subjects, which seemed to suggest they were allies.

Still, there were many means of control, and Yuuzhan Vong knew most of them.

As he reached to turn one of the short, armored sentients over to inspect his underside, he suddenly realized that something was wrong. The forest sounds around him had changed, with most of the animal life having fallen silent. He drew his blaster—casually, as if he really only meant to brush the side of his trousers.

"Lay down shame weapon!" A piping voice commanded in heavily accented Basic. "Lay down shame weapon or breathe-not you, offworlder!"

To emphasize the point, a quivering shaft appeared as if by magic in the tree nearest him. Uldir hesitated—he had seen arrows before. They had a primitive but effective way of making holes in people. On the other hand, he had a blaster, which made bigger, more efficient holes. But the voice was behind him, and he didn't know how many there were...

Whoever it was could have killed him already. He might as well see what the odds were, and what they had to say. He raised his arms slowly, turning toward the voice. He did not lay down the blaster.

The speaker was a stripe of color in the underbrush, hard to see, but Uldir could make out that it was one of the slender, six-limbed humanoids. Uldir breathed slowly and deeply, his eyes tracking through the strange leaves for others.

"Lay down shame weapon," the creature said again.

Uldir kept the weapon above his head, pointed at the sky, but did not do as demanded. He nodded his head at the corpses. "I didn't kill your friends," he said. "I found them like this. I'm in pursuit of the one who did this."

He heard faint rustlings in the brush all around him, and his heart sank. He had probably lost his opportunity to shoot his way out of the situation, if he'd ever had one.

Looking at the dead, however, he found part of him was glad of that.

The creature made a faint trumpeting sound, "If kill Cut-Up-Wish-to-bes, not our enemy," he stated. "Lay down shame weapon. Not tell again."

"I won't be defenseless," Uldir said. "I know what the Yuuzhan Vong do to their captives. I won't be taken captive."

Another trumpeting sound, this one trilled. An answering call came from someplace to his left.

"We not friends of the Cut-Up-People," the sentient said, emphatically. "Never we fodder them."

Uldir could see two more of them now, both of the stockier race. They bore bows, arrows, and stone axes with wooden hafts, like the one who had been speaking. None of them carried anything that looked like Yuuzhan Vong biotech. Uldir's shoulders relaxed a tick. Deliberately, he returned his blaster to its holster and raised his hands, palm outwards.

"The Yuuzhan Vong are my enemies," he said. "If you are also their enemies, we are friends."

The thin figure swayed forward. "Outworlders not friends," he said. "They bear shame, and bear it upon us."

"I came here only to find the one who left this trail," Uldir said. "When I have her, I will leave. I mean you no harm." He indicated himself. "My name is Uldir Lochett."

The creature regarded him for a moment. "You offer name?" He said at last.

"Yes. I offer my name."

The being seemed to consider that for a moment. "I offer in return. I am called Txer. I am leader of the Free People."

"Pleased to meet you, Txer."

Txer then said something in his native language, and several of the others—Uldir now guessed about fifteen—responded to him. It seemed to be a debate, of sorts, and he suspected the point debated had something to do with whether Uldir got to keep breathing or not. Finally Txer chopped both of his upper hands, and silence fell. He moved closer to Uldir, until they stood only about two meters apart.

"You follow the one who made this trail. She is strong."

"Yes," Uldir said.

"We hear her battle with Cut-Up-Wish-to-bes. Come to see. Hear your shame-thing land, watch you. You come only for her? Is truth?"

"Yes," Uldir replied.

"Why follow her? If they who fight Cut-Up-People your friends, why not her? Your words have Offworld poison in them, maybe."

"It's complicated," Uldir said. "Yes, she is enemy to the—er, Cut-Up-People. But I fear she seeks something here, something the Emperor left. Do you know of the Emperor?"

Txer trilled loud and long, then babbled again in his own language. A few of the others responded, sharply, and all of the creatures Uldir could see brandished their weapons. His hand itched toward his blaster.

"Dark man," Txer said, finally. "She seeks the things of the Dark Man."

"Yes, I suppose so," Uldir replied.

"So do Cut-Up-People," Txer replied. "They make holes, deep and long, in cracked mountain."

"Yes," Uldir said. "They look for his secrets. So does the one I follow."

"Must not to allow," Tser said, his voice a thin wisp. "Cut-Up-People bad. Dark man worse. All things of shame, his, I remember." His luminescent eyes narrowed. "Also remember some outworlders who broke mountain, buried his things. You cousin to them?"

"Sort of," Uldir replied.

Tser tilted his long head thoughtfully, then spoke some more to his people.

"We also follow this trail," he said, simply.

"I'll appreciate your help," Uldir replied.

"Not to help you," Tser said. "To watch."



They traveled for the rest of the daylight through steadily steepening terrain. Twice, for no reason Uldir could tell, they hid in thickets, remaining utterly silent until some unspoken signal released them to walk again. That night they camped in the cavernous shelter of the gnarled roots of a fantastically huge tree.

"Why do you call my weapon a shame weapon?" Uldir asked Tser, as the light faded to nothing.

"Is shame to use. Not from life." He paused, searching for words. "Machine," he said at last, as if the word bit him on the way out of his mouth.

**"we fight them," tser said firmly.
"and if you lie, we fight you too. we
fight until offworlders all gone, or
until we all die."**

"Oh," Uldir replied. It made sense—these were people who lived simply off what the land provided. Given that the Empire had been here, most of their experiences with technology had probably been of the negative sort.

"Is that why some fight for the Cut-Up-People? Because they also hate machines?" That was putting it mildly, of course. The Yuuzhan Vong considered all "dead" technology to be an abomination, and those who used it so unclean as to deserve extermination. Their conquest of the galaxy was more of a holy war than one for territory—they had long since conquered worlds enough for their people to live on.

"Wish-to-bes think like this, yes," Tser replied. "They say Cut-Up-People like us. They are not. Life is for respect. They do not respect life. They break it, twist it, make it as they want, make it foul. They do same to us."

"You're right about that," Uldir told him. "I've seen it happen, on world after world. And in the end, those who help them suffer more than those who resist them."

"Offworld wisdom we do not need," Tser said, stiffly. "Free People see this for themselves. Need not your eyes to see."

"I understand that," Uldir said.

"We fight them, like we fought Dark Man," Tser went on.

Stone weapons against the Vong? Uldir thought. That was an uneven fight. Unless the equation changed, the Free People were doomed.

"I should go on alone, when the light comes," Uldir said. "I don't want to put your people in danger."

"We fight them," Tser said firmly. "And if you lie, we fight you too. We fight until offworlders all gone, or until we all die. Sleep now. Tomorrow we enter Cut-Up territory, and then no sleep."

Uldir spent a restless night trying not to worry about his crew, hoping they were still alive and had managed to find a hiding place. He did not think Klin-Fa Gi would stop to sleep, and he felt her drawing ahead of him, and that made him even more anxious.

When he did sleep, his mind built dreams whose architecture was darker than the night.



"The jungle looks sick," Uldir remarked the next morning. The upper canopy looked ragged and skeletal, and the lower was covered with what looked like a fine mold or dust.

"Yes. Will get sicker," Tser assured him.

It did. Soon they were walking through only the memory of a forest: the mighty trunks were still there, but no hint of green or color of blossoms was anywhere in evidence—only a drab, charcoal gray.

"What did this?" Uldir asked.

Tser rubbed his mouth. "Not know. No one living has seen what does it. No one dead talks about it."

A kilometer later the trees became charred stumps, obviously scorched by some high heat. The burned zone went off to his left and right for as far as he could see.

Two kilometers later, even the stumps were gone, and they stood on a high ridge looking across a shallow valley at what remained of Mount Tantiss.

Under force of the seismic disruption, the peak had shuddered and collapsed. This side of the mountain had slumped and become a rolling, churned slope of talus. On this vast jumble of basalt, at about the same level he now stood on, grew the Yuuzhan Vong base.

Five of the living compounds looked to be star-shaped, or at least radially symmetrical. This sort of structure Uldir had seen before, in records taken by an erstwhile smuggler named Talon Kaarde. Called damuteks, the Yuuzhan Vong had grown some on the ruins of the Jedi academy when they'd captured the Yavin system a few months earlier. Uldir's old friend Anakin Solo had fought his way through a damutek and had reported a lot of useful information about them.

"I think those are Shaper compounds," Uldir told Tser.

"Shapers?"

"Yes. The Yuuzhan Vong are divided into castes. The Shapers are the ones who make their biotéché—ah, who twist life into the shapes they want. You understand?"

"Yes. Have seen—not as cut-up as those who fight. Have hair like nest of bivol-snakes."

"Shapers, right. Those compounds are their laboratories. But what's that thing?" He indicated something that resembled a squat cylindrical tower, albeit a crooked one. It was huge, at least a hundred meters high and nearly that in diameter. Like the damuteks, it looked as if it were made of coral. Unlike them, its upper surface seemed to be perforated with hundreds of openings, each of which must be a meter or so in diameter.

Uldir lifted his macrobinoculars and examined the base of the thing more closely, but he couldn't tell much else except—yes, it seemed to be slowly rotating, as if boring into or out of the ground.

"It's a drill," he muttered.

"Makes holes," Tser said. "We think, anyway."

"A big hole. That's some kind of giant worm, I'd guess, or was before their Shapers got hold of it."

"But one thing we never reckon," Tser said. "If digging, where puts-it rock?"

Uldir looked at Tser, reminding himself that primitive didn't mean stupid.

"That's a good question," he replied. "I guess it digests the rock, somehow, breaks it down. He shrugged. "Doesn't matter. But look, see those capillaries connecting the mine to the rayed compounds?"

"Yes."

"Those must be ways down into the mines the worm is digging. If they find anything, they'll bring them up through there. Which means I'll find Klin-Fa Gi either in the mines or in one of those compounds." He sighed. "In other words, she could be almost anywhere down there."

He moved the macrobinoculars down, and the multitudes of figures moving amongst the compounds resolved into recognizably Yuuzhan Vong shapes, but there were plenty of Myneyrshi—the tall spindly race—and Psadans, the armored ones—as well. There were also more than a few humans, of which Tser's band also included a number—the descendants of a long-lost colony, if he understood their story correctly.

He focused on the nearest group, who seemed to be tending some sort of plants that grew on slope, just above where the buried zone ended. They were about a hundred meters away, and Uldir saw no Yuuzhan Vong guards.

"Maybe I can pass for one of them," Uldir speculated. "If they've caught Klin-Fa, there ought to be talk about it. If they haven't, there might be talk about that too."

But looking up at the complex, he didn't feel much hope. He didn't have the leisure time to insinuate himself into the Yuuzhan Vong camp the way Anakin Solo had done on Yavin 4—Vega and the rest were out there, possibly fighting for their lives, waiting for him to finish his mission here and get back into space. Every second he spent here was a risk not just to his own life but to his crew's, and for that matter to everyone he and his crew might have rescued if they weren't here chasing one rogue Jedi.

"Jedi," he murmured, and Tser narrowed his eyes.

"What Jedi?" He asked, suspiciously. "You Jedi?"

"No, I'm not. The one I chase."

Uldir closed his eyes and concentrated, trying to ignore his body, his thoughts, his immediate surroundings, to feel through the living Force around him. To search for Klin-Fa Gi. She was probably the

only living Jedi on Wayland, and the Yuuzhan Vong did not appear in the Force at all. Klin-Fa ought to stand out like a Wookiee at a Tintinna wedding, even to his less-than-attuned senses.

The sounds around him faded thin and were forgotten. In the outward-reaching eye of his mind, he was a sphere, expanding, not so much taking in all that he touched, but reminding himself that he was already a part of it.

He felt the belt of sickly life behind him, growing stronger as it marched away from the Yuuzhan Vong settlement. He felt the verge of death and pain he stood on, and the odd blankness of the Yuuzhan Vong themselves. He felt the fractured stones of Mount Tantiss.

Part of him was excited. He'd never commanded this sort of clarity in the Force, even on his best day at the academy.

And yes, better still, there, a flicker, he felt Klin-Fa Gi, and it seemed she was near. He felt her heart pounding, sensed danger, a goal reached, something destined found...

Then a black spike of anger and despair struck him between the eyes, and a shriek of hatred that was somehow more the taste of salt and bitter liqui peels than a sound.

His tenuous hold on the Force snapped, replaced by another sensation, a sort of burning in his bones.

It took him a moment to understand the feeling was coming from beneath him, up through his feet, that it was the ground trembling. And it was growing stronger. He opened his eyes, gazing at the ruined mountain, at the terrible Vong-thing growing into it.

Something was different, but it took him a moment to place it. Then he saw, but still didn't understand. The tower was larger, puffy, bloated looking.

"Tser," he said, "Run. Now." He bolted down the hill, across the blasted landscape toward the Yuuzhan Vong settlement.

"Why?" Tser shouted from behind him.

"Just do it!" He didn't have time to explain that he wasn't quite sure why, but that if he waited to think it through they would all be dead.

A glance behind him showed Tser and his Free People still hesitating. "Come on!" he howled.

Tser started forward. After that, Uldir kept all of his attention on the rocky path and the rumbling in the planet that grew stronger with each footfall. He ran, hoping the Free People followed—hoping his luck hadn't betrayed him at last.

He'd reached the bottom of the foothill they'd stood upon and just started up the slope toward the damuteks when he heard shouts from the sentients behind him. The Psadan, who were basically armored spheres, were mostly rolling down the hill. The Myneyrshi were having a bit more trouble with their delicate looking legs. As they started uphill, however, their positions were reversed. The Myneyrshi pulled themselves gracefully up the slope with their six limbs, while the Psadan began to lag behind. It was Tser who first shouted and exclaimed, and Uldir followed the direction the fellow indicated with his gaze. The vibration in the ground was rattling his teeth, now.

The tower bristled. From each of the hundreds of openings on its upper surface, a snaky tube emerged and lengthened, arcing in unison out over the valley and toward the foothills in what looked like slow motion, but which, given the distances involved, was probably

quite fast. Each of the tubes was headed for a slightly different destination. Many of them seemed to be coming straight toward Uldir.

Uldir quickened his pace.

"What is?" Tser asked.

"We have to make it out of the burned zone!" Uldir shouted. "To the first of the Yuuzhan Vong gardens."

He glanced up, and could see the dark mouths of the tubes facing down now, like cave worms coming to take a bite out of him. How low did they have to get? The sky was full of the arcing shafts now, some aimed far beyond the ridge. It might have been curiously pretty if he didn't remember the perimeter of destruction, if the burned zone didn't fit so well with the geometry of what he was seeing.

They were about to find out what the drilling-worm digested rock into, and he didn't think they were going to enjoy the enlightenment.

The end of the scorch-zone was just ahead, but the Psadan weren't doing so well. One stumbled, and Tser supported him. Another slipped back near Uldir. He bit his lip. If he paused to help the Psadan, he might die, which was one thing, but then he would fail his mission, which was altogether another. He couldn't...

No. Whatever else his mission was, first and foremost it was to help his fellow being in need.

He put a shoulder under the Psadan's stout arm, and together they struggled toward the strip of green ahead. They had maybe thirty meters to go—some of the Myneyrshi had already reached it.

The sky was a vault of black cords now, and an opening wide enough to swallow Uldir was dropping swiftly toward him. He didn't think it would swallow him, though. He wondered, in fact, if he would feel much of anything.

The smaller rocks on the hillside were actually rattling now, from the pressure building below them. Any moment now...

Uldir's foot struck a rock wrong, and he slipped down, his ankle twisting painfully as the Psadan's weight fell disproportionately on

him. Grunting apologetically, the Psadan tried to lift him into a carry. "Too late," Uldir muttered.

He didn't see the yellow-and-black clad figure until she was beside him, until her strength had flowed into him and he and the Psadan were practically carried forward to the edge of the Yuuzhan Vong fields by the power of the Force.

"You're an idiot, Uldir Lochett," Klin-Fa-Gi informed him.

The Free People shouted as one, as out and across the valley the hundreds of tubes coughed out a fluorescent orange haze. The smell was lightning against stone, hot copper hitting water. The haze collected in low spots, cooling to blood red and then nearly black, rolling over the hills in an expanding torus which left the Yuuzhan Vong base and gardens—and thankfully, Uldir Lochett—untouched in the center.

"What is it?" Tser asked, waving at the terrifying sight.

"Mining vents," Klin-Fa Gi said, briskly. The Chom-Vrone chews up rocks and digests into a state of semi-plasma in a process a lot like the weapons their skips use. When it has a full load, it spews it in a perimeter around their settlement, as you see. Keeps things clear and undesirables out."

"Yeah," Uldir grunted. "Or almost all of them, anyway." He noticed that she had a few new wounds, though none of them looked serious. She also had something strapped to her back, something wrapped in layers of what seemed to be living tissue.

"What's that you've got?"

"Never mind that now," Klin Fa said. "We've other troubles." She pointed. Coming down in a wave from the settlement above were dozens of Yuuzhan Vong warriors. Behind Uldir, the curtain of superheated rock vapor was still spreading. They could face the warriors or fly.

"Well," Uldir grunted. "At least we have our backs to a wall." ☐

To Be Continued . . .

Vega Sepan: Female Human Soldier 6; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 17 (+5 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 44/12; Atk +9/+4 melee (2d4+2, crit 19–20, punch) or +8/+3 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; SZ M; FP 2; DSP 0; Rep +2; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 10. Challenge Code: C.

Equipment: Spacer's clothes, medpack, blaster pistol, encrypted comlink.

Skills: Astrogate +5, Computer Use +5, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (streetwise) +6, Knowledge (tactics) +10, Pilot +8, Read/Write Basic, Repair +4, Sense Motive +3, Speak Basic, Speak Dug, Spot +1, Survival +2, Treat Injury +4.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Armor Proficiency (light), Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Martial Arts, Martial Arts, Starship Operation (space transport), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (punch), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibroweapons).

Leaft: Male Dug Soldier 4; Init +4 (Dex); Def 19 (+4 class, +1 size, +4 Dex); Spd 6m; VP/WP 27/11; Atk +6 melee (1d3+1, punch) or +9 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol) or +7/+7 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol) or +5/+5/+5 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol) or +1/+1/+1/+1 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Great shout; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +0; SZ S; FP 1; DSP 0; Rep +1; Str 13, Dex 19, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 7. Challenge Code: B.

Equipment: Spacer's clothes, medpack, 3 blaster pistols, encrypted comlink.

Skills: Balance +7, Climb +3, Hide +8, Jump +3, Knowledge (medicine) +2, Pilot +10, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Dug, Repair +5, Speak Basic, Speak Dug, Treat Injury +6.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Armor Proficiency (light), Multishot, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibroweapons).

Vook Gehu: Male Duros Tech Specialist 5; Init +0; Def 14 (+4 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP 15/9; Atk +1 melee (1d3–2, punch) or +3 ranged; SQ Research, instant mastery (Spot), expert (Craft: sublight drives), tech specialty (mechanic +1); SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +3; SZ M; FP 3; DSP 0; Rep +1; Str 7, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 19, Wis 13, Cha 9. Challenge Code: B.

Equipment: Spacer's clothes, medpack, blaster pistol, encrypted comlink, datapad.

Skills: Astrogate +12, Computer Use +12, Craft (hyperdrives) +15, Craft (space transports) +12, Craft (sublight drives) +14, Disable Device +4, Knowledge (starships) +15, Pilot +6, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Binary, Read/Write Duresse, Repair +13, Speak Basic, Speak Binary, Speak Dug, Speak Duresse, Speak Huttese, Spot +5.

Feats: Skill Emphasis (Craft: hyperdrives, Knowledge: starships), Spacer, Starship Operation (space transport), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).





Horde

BY TIMOTHY ZAHN

ILLUSTRATED BY DAVE DORMAN

In ones and twos, with a gentle clatter and a dignified bustle, the musicians started to drift onstage. They moved to their assigned seats or stands, gathered their instruments, and began the muted cacophony of their individual warm-up procedures. The audience, which had been abuzz with the usual pre-concert conversation, quieted itself in inverse proportion to the increasing noise from the stage, an air of anticipation rising from the assemblage and spreading over it like an invisible fog.

As well it should. Here, on this benighted Mid-Rim world of Chibias, the Coruscant Full Symphony was about to perform.

Seated in the twelfth-to-the-last row, two seats in from the left-most aisle, Mara Jade took a deep breath and tried to savor the moment. She had always loved the orchestra and in days gone by had made it a point to attend a concert whenever time and her duties permitted.

Occasionally, she'd gone so far as to manufacture a reason to attend, picking at random some high official with a permanent box and suggesting he be kept under observation for the evening. Her master usually indulged her wishes, though she doubted he'd ever been fooled by her excuses. Indeed, nothing had ever seemed to fool him.

Nothing, that is, except the manner and time of his own death.

She shifted uncomfortably in her seat, the memories of that moment darkening the corners of her mind even through the subtle and whimsical musical preparations going on before her on the distant stage. She'd come here tonight hoping to bring back the soothing memories of better times. Instead, all she was getting was a new emphasis of the gaping hole where her life had once been.

It was Skywalker's fault, his and Vader's.

And, of course, hers, for not killing Skywalker when she'd had the chance.

The entire orchestra was onstage now, the warm-up in full voice, but the magic was gone. With an angry sadness, Mara knew she'd lingered on this world one evening too long. It was time to move on.

Murmuring apologies to the two Duros seated beside her, she sidled her way past them. No, with Ysanne Isard and all of Imperial Intelligence hunting for her, she had definitely overstayed her welcome.

She would return to her modest hotel room, pack her small collection of belongings, and get herself off this rock. There would be freighters coming and going from the city's spaceport all night, and the guild hiring center that handled pick-up crews was open around the clock. It should be easy enough to talk herself into a temporary job.

Reaching the aisle, she started walking up the gentle slope toward the exit. Ahead, just inside the door, three men were having a quiet but intense conversation with a thin, scraggly haired youth. One of the men was middle-aged, his short dark hair salted with bits of white, his outfit the kind of formal evening wear one would expect of a properly cultured concertgoer. The other two wore identical tunics and the gold nameplates of concert-hall personnel, as well as the weighty look of security types.

Mara eyed the kid, mentally shaking her head at his simple traveling outfit. Back on Coruscant, he wouldn't even have been let into an evening performance looking that shabby. He was even lugging a backpack, of all things.

Then, even as a fresh set of bittersweet memories drifted in front of her eyes, she saw the man in the formalwear slip something the size and shape of a datacard into the side pocket of the kid's backpack.

Mara slowed her pace, trained investigative reflexes kicking into gear. The man wasn't simply replacing something he'd taken out earlier; the movement had been surreptitious and designed to be out of the view of the two security men. It wasn't some kind of courier handoff, not with those two security men standing over the boy, and with the boy as the center of attention, it seemed unlikely the man was getting rid of something incriminating before he himself could be searched.

That left only one possibility. Whatever he'd put into the backpack was designed to get the kid in trouble.

One of the security men had taken charge of the backpack now, his partner gently but insistently nudging the kid through the door back into the lobby. Mara picked up her pace again as they disappeared, wondering what exactly she was going to do.

Wondering, for that matter, what she even should do. This was none of her business; and as an ex-Emperor's Hand with no legal authority, she was hardly in a position to make it her business—

especially with hand on her tail.

But the kid had looked so confused and lost, as she herself had been feeling lately.

Just inside the door, across the aisle from where the quiet altercation had taken place, an usher stood at her post. She was fingering her collection of program datacards, her head turned half around as she craned her neck toward the lobby and the recently departed group.

Which left her completely unprepared as Mara slammed full-tilt into her.

"Oh! Excuse me," Mara gasped, grabbing the woman for their mutual balance as the impact threatened to dump both of them onto the thickly carpeted floor. "How very clumsy of me. Are you all right?"

"I'm fine," the woman assured her, fumbling to keep a grip on her datacards. "You?"

"I'm fine," Mara said, smoothing out the woman's jacket where

kid looked dirty, had a sprinkling of chin stubble, and apparently had been sleeping in the clothes he had on. What in the Empire could possibly make him worth such a frame-up?

There was only one way to find out. "May I help you?" she asked, putting official firmness into her voice.

The intense man turned to look, his eyes glancing again at her nameplate. "Who are you?"

"I'm Litassa Colay," Mara told him, adding an imaginary surname to the one etched into her borrowed nameplate. "Director of Offworld Special Events for the concert hall. Is there a problem . . ." she dipped her eyes to the nameplate of the man holding the backpack "Jayx?"

"We're not sure," Jayx said, his face a little uncertain as he looked her over. But she had a proper nameplate, and of course he couldn't be expected to recognize everyone in the concert hall's upper management. "This gentleman is Counselor Ralnes of Governor Egron's staff. He says he saw the boy here fiddling with a blaster inside his backpack. He's called the authorities, and we're waiting for them to show up and do a proper search.

"We're making sure we follow the law," the second security man, Tomin, added.

"Very commendable," Mara said, throwing a quick glance behind the group. There were three hinged, swing-out doors set into the

lobby's side wall: unmarked, but probably offices or small storage rooms. Mara reached out to the Force, hoping to get some idea of what lay beyond each of the doors.

But there was nothing. No extra knowledge or insight; no touch of another mind; no sensation whatsoever.

The Force, apparently, was no longer with her.

Meanwhile, she was facing off against two presumably trained security guards, each of whom outweighed her by at least ten kilos, with an assumed identity either of them might see through any second now, in the middle of a city and a planet and an Empire where she was a wanted woman.

Her sleeve gun and lightsaber were back in her hotel room.

What in the Empire was she doing here?

For whatever crazy reason, she'd dealt herself into this mess. There was no way out but to see it through, preferably someplace a little less public.

"But not in the middle of the lobby," she continued. Picking the leftmost door at random, she gestured toward it. "This way, please."

Tomin took the boy's arm, and the group headed that direction. Mara stayed behind them, counting out the timing. As Jayx got within three paces, she moved to just behind him and got a grip on the backpack straps. "Open the door," she ordered him.

Obediently, reflexively, he let her take the pack and stepped forward, pulling out his keycard and slipping it into the slot. The door beeped, and he pulled it open.

To reveal, not an office or storage room, but a long corridor with several other doors leading off it. At the far end, it bent to the left, probably headed backstage.

Not exactly what she'd been expecting, but it should do. "Go ahead," she said, waving Tomin forward with her free hand. "We'll

There was nothing. No extra knowledge or insight; no touch of another mind; no sensation whatsoever. The Force, apparently, was no longer with her.

she'd grabbed her. "I am just so blind in the dark."

"That's all right," the usher said. "You'd better hurry, or you'll miss the overture."

"Right," Mara said, brushing past her and hurrying through the door.

There she paused long enough to pin the usher's appropriated nameplate onto her own gown before continuing on to the lobby.

The foursome was still there, gathered off to one side out of the path of the last few stragglers hurrying to get into the concert. The security man was still holding the kid's backpack, but he was making no effort to search it. The man in the formalwear, for his part, was standing a respectful pace back from the rest of them.

Mara studied the latter as she walked toward the group. He was younger than she'd first thought, she saw now, probably no more than thirty years old. His face and posture seemed calm and poised, but she could sense a tension lurking just beneath the surface. Something was going on, all right, something important.

"... until the proper authorities arrive," the intense man was saying as Mara strode within earshot. His eyes flicked to the intruder, taking in Mara's face, outfit, and nameplate in that single glance, then flicking just as casually away.

The two security men, in contrast, hadn't even noticed her. "Absolutely, Counselor," one of them replied, his gaze locked on the kid. "Imperial law is clear on the procedure for someone caught with illegal weapons."

Mara grimaced to herself. So that was the game. Plant something incriminating on the kid, then accuse him of a weapons violation, which would allow an immediate search. The police would find the plant, and the kid would find himself up to his chin in trouble.

But why? In the better lighting out here, she could see that the

wait for them in the first rehearsal room."

Tomin's forehead creased a little at that, but he turned and started down the corridor without comment. Mara motioned Counselor Raines to follow. Again, his eyes flicked to her face as if sensing the trap, but the momentum of the situation was against him, and he too headed in without argument. Mara stepped in front of Jayx and the boy, as if she were going to join the procession—

And grabbing the edge of the door, she slammed it shut behind them.

Jayx was still standing there, looking stunned, as she whirled around and thrust the kid's backpack into his face. Automatically, his hands leaped up to protect his head, and with her free hand, Mara jabbed him hard under the rib cage.

He doubled over with a pained gasp. Mara considered chopping him on the side of the neck to make sure he stayed down, decided it wasn't necessary, and instead swung him around and shoved him hard against the door.

Just in time. The door was starting to open again as either Raines or Tomin tried to charge back out at her. Jayx's impact slammed it shut again, probably braining whoever it was in the process.

The kid was gaping at her. "Come on," Mara ordered, grabbing his wrist and heading for the exit doors.

For the first half-second it was like tugging on a statue. Then, abruptly, he came unstuck from the inlaid marble floor and let her drag him along. "But I haven't done anything," he protested.

"I'd love to see you convince them of that," Mara said back over her shoulder, glancing through the elaborately etched glass doors at the front of the concert hall. No signs of any police yet. Pushing open the door, she pulled the kid out into the night air. "Your friend Counselor Raines planted something in your pack."

She kept them at a fast jog for the first half block, then slowed to a walk to better blend in with the rest of the evening pedestrian traffic. There were no shouts or other signs of pursuit from behind them, and for the rest of that first block Mara began to wonder whether Raines had called the police at all.

And then, just as they reached the corner, a small urban personnel carrier came roaring down the street, heading for the concert hall.

Only it wasn't carrying police. As it passed under a streetlight, she caught the white glint of stormtrooper armor.

The boy cleared his throat. "I don't suppose you have anything to eat," he said hopefully. Apparently, he hadn't noticed the stormtroopers.

"Sure," Mara said with a sigh, turning down the side street and heading for her hotel.

What in the Empire had she gotten herself into?



With stormtroopers probably fanning out across the theater district, it didn't seem like a good idea to hit a cantina or tapcafé, and all she had back in her room were a couple of pieces of slightly stale fruit and a pack of emergency ship rations.

But the kid wasn't picky. He dug into the meager fare as if he hadn't seen food in a week. Studying his hollow cheeks as he ate, Mara decided that he quite possibly hadn't.

Both pieces of fruit and three ration bars later, he finally shambled to a stop. "Thanks," he said, draining his fifth glass of water. "Sorry, I guess I was hungrier than I thought."

"That's all right," Mara assured him. "So, what was that all about back at the concert hall?"

He shook his head. "I don't know. All I know is that I was supposed to meet someone, and that he never showed up, and I can't get home—"

"Whoa," Mara said, holding up a hand. "Let's take it from the beginning. Where are you from?"

"Saraban City," he told her. "It's on Sibilsine. I was, well, sort of working there when a man came to see me. He said that if I came here to Chibbias that he had a really good job for me in the governor's palace. This is where the governor lives, isn't it?"

"He's right over there, under all those domes and towers," Mara said dryly, nodding toward the window and the view of the governor's palace a dozen blocks away.

The kid squinted. "Oh, Yeah. Anyway, I got here a week ago. He'd given me a spaceliner ticket, but he wasn't at the spaceport to meet me. The address he told me to meet him at wasn't a real place—that's why I thought this might not be the right city. I only had a one-way ticket, and I didn't have enough money to go home, and all of it ran out a couple of days ago anyway."

"Where have you been staying?" Mara asked.

"Out there," he said, waving vaguely at the window.

"I suppose not," Mara agreed. "What made you come to the concert? And how did you get in without any money?"

"Oh, I already had a ticket," the boy said. "It was in the packet he gave me with my liner ticket. I thought maybe he was planning to show up there." He shrugged. "If not, at least I could get a couple hours of sleep."

He ran a hand through his slightly greasy hair. "I guess I'll never know now."

"Oh, I think he was there," Mara assured him, picking up the boy's backpack. "At least in spirit. You were set up."

"Set up?" he echoed, frowning. "What do you mean?"

"I mean someone lured you here, let you get all confused and hungry, and then set you up for a serious problem."

She held up the datacard Counselor Raines had slipped into the backpack. "With this."

The boy frowned a little harder. Or maybe he was just trying to read the label. "What is it?"

"I don't know," Mara said, studying the markings. "But it's got Governor Egron's official crest on it, plus what looks like a Level Two Secret classification."

His eyes bulged. "The governor's crest?"

"That's right," Mara tossed him the datacard and stood up. "They were setting you up to get caught with stolen government secrets."

She crossed to the room's computer and turned it on. "But that's crazy," the kid protested from behind her. "What in the—I mean, why? Why me?"

"In cases like this, the answer's always the same," Mara said, calling up a Holonet link. This still didn't make any sense, but at least she now had a place to start looking for their mysterious would-be blackmailer. "Specifically, you have something they want."

"That's even crazier," he insisted. "I haven't got anything. No family, no

money. No friends."

Mara felt her lip twitch. Just like her. "What about skills or training?" she suggested. The Holonet came up, and she keyed in one of her special access codes. "Anything that might be useful to someone? Blast."

"What is it?" he asked, levering himself out of his chair and coming over to stand behind her.

"I was hoping to tap into the palace computer and try to locate this Counselor Raines," she told him, trying another code. This one didn't work, either. "I know some high-level passcodes, but it looks like the governor's people have gotten in and changed them."

"Oh," the boy said. "Can I try?"

Mara frowned up at him. But the boy seemed perfectly serious. "What, you know some Imperial access codes?" she asked sarcastically.

"Someone in the palace is involved," Mara told him. "That same someone was expecting Raines to bring you in from the concert hall."

"Well, no," he conceded. "But I'm pretty good with computers."

Mara hesitated. A waste of time; but on the other hand, she didn't have any better ideas at the moment. She'd already locked out any backtrack probes they might try, so it couldn't hurt to let him play with it if he wanted to. "Okay, sure," she said, standing up and giving him the chair. Her stomach rumbled, reminding her she hadn't eaten since lunch, and she stepped over to the open package of ration bars the kid had ravaged. Maybe some food would help her think. She chose one of the bars and peeled back the wrapper—

"Okay," the kid called.

"Okay what?" Mara asked, taking a bite.

"I'm in," he said. "What are we looking for again?"

Mara went back to him, a cold chill running up her back. A Level Three Governor/Diplomatic Imperial encryption; and this street kid had sliced it like it wasn't even there? "We're looking for the man at the concert hall," she said between stiff lips. "I doubt Raines is his real name, so you'll probably need to pull up a list of personnel images."

"Oh, right," the boy said, his fingers pounding delicately at the keys. The first group of personnel files came up, and he leaned forward to study the computer display. "Let's see..."

"He's not there," Mara said. "Move on."

The kid looked up at her. "But I haven't had a chance to look at them."

"I have," Mara told him, snagging a second chair and pulling it over beside him. "He's not there."

"But—"

"Hey, trust me," Mara interrupted gently, forcing a smile. This kid was still an enigma, but at least she now knew why he was worth coming halfway across the sector. "You're good at computers.

This part I'm good at."

"Oh. Okay." He still looked puzzled, but he nevertheless turned back to the computer and pulled up the next set of files.

It was a good-sized palace, and Governor Egron seemed to have more than his fair share of employees, servants, advisors, and other random people feeding at the governmental trough. Even with Mara's trained eye and disciplined mind it took them over two hours to go through the files.

In the end, they came up with nothing.

"I guess he's not connected with the governor, after all," the boy said, leaning back in his chair and rubbing his fingers.

"Oh, he's connected, all right," Mara said. "Otherwise, where did he get that datacard? He's just not officially connected."

The boy seemed to digest that. "So what do we do?"

"What you do is stay here," Mara said, getting up and going over to the bed. Getting her travel bag out from beneath it, she pulled out her sleeve gun holster and strapped it onto her left forearm. Retrieving the blaster itself from beneath her pillow, she holstered

it. Then, crossing to the small closet by the door, she pulled out a demure but expensive-looking jacket.

The boy hadn't missed a move. "Are you the police?" he asked, sounding more in awe than wor-

ried. "Or a Detector?"

"Neither," Mara said, feeling another twinge of loss for the life she'd once had. "I'll be back soon," she told him, putting the jacket on and making sure the left sleeve was clear for a quick draw. "Don't call anyone, don't answer your comlink, and don't open the door. Just pretend you're not here. Shower or sleep if you want. I'll be back as soon as I can."

"Where are you going?"

"Someone in the palace is involved," Mara told him. "That same someone was expecting Raines to bring you in from the concert hall. He's likely to be worried right now, wondering where you are and what went wrong with the plan."

She smiled tightly. "When a tree's already shaking, it's much easier to knock the fruit out of it."

"Oh," he said. "Yeah."

"Right," Mara said. "So you just stay put."

She paused at the door as a thought suddenly struck her. "By the way, I never did get your name."

He shrugged. "They call me Ghent."

"Ghent what?"

He seemed confused. "Just Ghent. I mean, I used to have—but nobody really uses it anymore, and—"

"All right, fine," she interrupted. "I'll see you later."

She went out, making sure the door sealed behind her. If Ghent was that impressed with a simple sleeve blaster, she thought wryly, it was just as well he hadn't seen what was nestled in its long pouch under her left arm.

Reaching into the pouch, making sure her lightsaber was riding loose and ready, she headed into the night.



"The name is Arica Pladeux," Mara said briskly for the third time that evening, this time to the guard captain waiting just inside the palace entrance foyer. "The recognition code is Hapspr-Barrink. Inform Governor Egron that I want to see him immediately."

The captain's mouth twitched. "Return to your duties," he ordered the stormtroopers who had escorted Mara in from the palace gate. "You come with me."

He led the way across the foyer and through a tall set of double doors that slid open at a muttered word. Beyond them was a private reception room, smaller than the foyer but more elaborately decorated. It was dome-shaped, two stories high, with curved support columns and a railed balcony that ran around the room at the second-floor level. "So you're here on behalf of a Grand Moff, are you?" the captain commented as the doors slid shut behind them.

A test? Obviously. "Your datapad must have a short in it," Mara said. "The recognition code I gave you is that of an envoy from a Grand Admiral."

The captain studied her face. "Not entirely," he said. "I understand there's another word to the code."

"You understand correctly," Mara acknowledged. "I'll give that word to the Governor. No one else."

The captain nodded slowly. "Of course," he said. "Wait here."

He strode across the room and exited through one of the doors there. Mara glanced around, taking in the details of the room—

"Perhaps I can be of assistance," a familiar voice called from overhead.

Mara looked up. The man who called himself Counselor Raines was standing directly above her, leaning on the railing as he gazed down.

"Perhaps you can," Mara agreed. "Shall we talk?"

He smiled slightly as he straightened up and started walking around the circle. A few steps ahead of him, a spiral staircase began to descend, corkscrewing its way down to Mara's level. Mara watched as he descended the staircase, looking for clues to his identity or position in his step and posture. Not military, she decided, or at least not of high rank. But not a career politician, either. Special forces? Possibly.

He reached the lower floor and walked toward her. "My name's Counselor Raines," he said. "I don't think we were properly introduced back at the concert hall."

"No, we weren't," Mara agreed. He had, she noted, a fresh bruise on his forehead. Apparently he'd been the one who'd been charging back at her when she slammed Jaxx into the concert hall door. "For that matter, we haven't been now, either," she added. "There isn't any such person as Counselor Raines."

His lip tightened into an ironic smile. "So you've been into the governor's files already, have you?" He shrugged, conceding the point. "Very well. Call me Markko. I'm sort of unofficially attached to Governor Egron."

"How unofficially?" Mara asked.

Markko smiled again, with a shade more irony this time. "Elsewhere in the Empire, I'd probably be called a friend," he said. "But as

you know, high-ranking officials aren't allowed to have friends."

Mara worked hard to keep her face expressionless. But something must have leaked through anyway, because she caught his twitch of response. "Speaking of friends," he added smoothly, "how is yours?"

"Safely tucked away," Mara said, annoyed at having lost a point already in this little match. "He's rather confused, though. Why don't you fill me in?"

"Are you really from a Grand Admiral?" Markko asked bluntly.

"I've acted as courier for them on occasion," Mara told him, which happened to be true. "At the moment, I'm between jobs."

"Then this isn't an official inquiry?"

"Let's say the situation has piqued my interest," Mara said. "What has Ghent done that you feel it worthwhile to spin him in circles this way?"

Markko shrugged. "The governor has a job that requires his assistance. I volunteered to obtain it."

"By blackmailing him with a stolen datapad? Why didn't you just hire him?"

Markko snorted. "What, a rotten little fringe slicer?"

"A rotten little fringe slicer whose help you need," Mara countered. "So. What am I bid?"

Markko seemed taken aback. "What?"

"You heard me," Mara said. "You need Ghent. I've got him. How clear do I have to make it?"

"You're going to sell him out?" Markko asked suspiciously. "I thought you were his friend."

"You're the one who said he was my friend, not me," Mara pointed out. "But that's not what I meant. I'm offering his services for hire."

She lifted her eyebrows slightly. "And after what you've put him through, don't expect him to come cheap."

Markko's face had taken on a knowing look. "Uh-huh," he said. "And as his broker, I gather you'll be taking the usual ten percent?"

"Twenty," Mara corrected. "Because I'm also his guarantor."

"Guarantor of what?"

"His safety," Mara said softly. "If he's as good a slicer as you imply, the Empire might find other uses for him. I wouldn't want him to trip over anything, say, on the way out the palace door."

Markko smiled. "Of course," he said. "All right, I'll play. How much do you want?"

Mara made a quick mental calculation. A top computer expert could command five or six hundred an hour from a legitimate company. Time to see just how badly Markko wanted Ghent's help. "Two thousand," she said.

Markko's eyes went wide. "Two thousand?"

"Yes," Mara said. "Per hour, of course."

Markko shook his head. "You're insane."

"And you're desperate," she reminded him. "Because Governor Egron didn't ask you to hire Ghent at all, did he? No Imperial governor would suggest hiring a fringe slicer to do a job for him."

She leveled a finger toward him. "No, Markko. You're the one Egron hired to do the job. Only you're not a good enough slicer to handle it, are you?"

This time it was his microscopic reaction that indicated the mark

had been hit dead-center. And as she had earlier, he also recognized that a point had been lost. "Very clever," he said sourly. "Which Grand Admiral did you say you're working for?"

"I said I was between jobs," Mara told him. "What do you need Ghent to do?"

The muscles in Markko's cheeks tensed slightly. "We have a Rebel computer system," he said, very softly. "Not just a line computer, but one captured from a sector command center. If we can slice it, we can clear the vermin out this entire region of space."

Mara took a deep breath, her hand wanting to reach to her lightsaber. A chance to hit back at Skywalker's Rebel friends. "And you can't handle it?"

Markko grimaced. "I'm a pretty fair slicer," he said. "But this is definitely out of my league."

"How very inconvenient for you," Mara murmured. Skywalker's face was hovering in front of her eyes ...

Mara couldn't make out the words coming over the comlink, but from her side of the conversation it was clear that Markko wasn't happy at all.

"I'll give you eight hundred for him," Markko suggested.

With an effort, Mara shook Skywalker out of her thoughts. "The deal is two thousand."

"This is ridiculous," Markko exploded. "A thousand, then. That's twice what he could make in any legitimate corporation."

"Legitimate corporations don't make you sleep in the street for two days and then try to blackmail you," Mara said. "Two thousand. Take it or leave it."

Markko took a ragged breath. "I'll take it," he said between clenched teeth. "When?"

"Oh, I don't know," Mara glanced over at an ornate chrono set into the wall. "The night's still young. We'll be here in two hours."

"Tonight?" Markko seemed startled.

"Why not?" Mara asked. "You want it sliced, let's get it sliced. What entrance should we use?"

Markko pursed his lips. "Southwest gate," he said. "I'll be waiting to let you in."

"We'll be there," Mara promised. "Just make sure you have the money ready."

The city was still buzzing with vehicles and pedestrians as she was escorted to the outer palace gate. She considered hailing a transport, decided against it, and headed off instead on foot. Ghent, she suspected, would be excited about the deal she'd just struck.

Assuming, of course, that she decided to tell him about it.

Because there was something about Markko's story that bothered her. Something that didn't quite hang together.

Why would Markko feel he had to blackmail or—now—hire Ghent to do this job for him? For that matter, why would Governor Egron have hired Markko in the first place? The Empire had any number of competent computer experts; maybe not as good or as

fast as Ghent, but competent nevertheless. Why weren't any of them on the job?

Maybe they already were, and had merely gotten stalled. But then why let Ghent dangle for a week? Why not immediately haul him to the palace and order him to do the job? Governor Egron was the Empire, after all, at least in this sector. He could commandeer anyone or anything he wanted.

No, there was something else going on here. Something worth a great deal of subterfuge, and a great deal of money.

And, apparently, something worth following her for.

She'd spotted him within the first block: a smallish, nondescript man, doodling along behind her as if he was just in from the farm-lands to sample the sights and sounds of the big city. Not bad, but not nearly good enough for someone with her training. Obviously, Markko didn't trust her to show up as promised.

Obviously, too, he had underestimated her.

This had possibilities.

She kept up her pace, heading straight in the direction she'd

started out on, keeping an eye on the man following in her wake. Up ahead, around the next corner, were the entrances to two of the city's smaller theaters.

At least one of which should be letting out just about now.

She rounded the corner, putting her temporarily out of sight of her tail. Parked along both sides of the walkway, as she'd expected, were rows of landspeeders; and streaming out the theater doors on the far side of the street were the evening's crowd of humans and aliens.

Perfect.

Glancing back once to make sure the corner building was still blocking the tail's view of her, she dropped flat on the sidewalk and rolled beneath one of the parked vehicles. In some ways it was an obvious maneuver, but the Emperor's trainers had assured her that most people, even professionals, simply didn't think of it.

Especially when other possibilities were so much more likely. All along the street now, vehicles were starting up and pulling out of their parking spaces as the exiting theatergoers headed for home. She kept her attention on the corner, and a few seconds later a pair of low-cut boots appeared. The man paused, then hurried forward.

But his mission was doomed, and he knew it. Too many vehicles, too many people, and too little light. He went a couple of landspeeders past Mara's hiding place and then gave up, slowing to a reluctant halt. Snarling out a curse that was audible even over the noise of departing vehicles, he turned back.

He was just passing Mara's landspeeder again when another set of boots joined him from around the corner. "What are you doing?" a man's voice hissed, barely audible over the rumbling of the crowd. "Where is she?"

Interesting, Mara thought, edging as close to the edge of the vehicle as she dared. So there had been a second tail, someone ready to take over the chase when Mara succeeded in dumping the first, more obvious one. Maybe Markko hadn't underestimated her as much as she'd thought.

"Where do you think she is?" the first tail retorted. "Somewhere here, or somewhere gone."

The newcomer cursed, less imaginatively than his partner. "Better report it. Markko's not going to be happy."

"Markko's not going to be happy," the first tail mimicked savagely. "No kidding."

The report was short and sharp. Mara couldn't make out the words coming over the comlink, but from her side of the conversation it was clear that Markko wasn't happy at all. The two men turned and stomped off back around the corner in the direction from which they'd come.

Mara gave them to the count of thirty to get some distance. Then, rolling back from beneath the speeder, she brushed the worst of the dirt off her gown and headed off in pursuit.

They had followed her. It was only right that she return the favor.

And, perhaps, show them how this tailing business was supposed to be done.



She had expected the two men to return to the palace, where about all she would be able to see would be whether it was Markko or someone else who met them at the door. To her surprise, they instead turned down a side street two blocks short of the palace. A minute later, they disappeared through the front door of a large private home midway down the block.

Mara continued on to the back of house, keeping to the opposite side of the street and trying to sort out this unexpected development as she worked her way to the back. Why would Markko send them somewhere outside the palace? Were they simply going home? But why would he let them do that without first getting a full report?

Or was this Markko's home? But again, why not debrief them at the palace?

The back door was locked, but not seriously enough to be a problem. The rear of the house was dark and silent, but as she moved along a shadowy hallway she could see diffuse light and hear soft voices coming from somewhere ahead of her. The light and sound began to sharpen as she passed through an informal dining room, a game room, and a meditation chamber that seemed laid out more for entertainment than actual solitude.

And then, turning one final corner, she was there.

The room was about five meters along the hallway, its open door spilling out both light and tense-sounding conversation. Two of the voices she recognized: her two erstwhile tails. There were at least three other voices, though Markko's didn't seem to be one of them. She strained her ears, trying to pick out the words—

"Just keep your hands where I can see them," Markko said conversationally from behind her.

Mara bit down hard on a curse. Concentrating so hard on the conversation, she had completely forgotten to keep an eye on her own back.

But then, in days gone by, she hadn't needed to. The Force had always given her subtle nudges and warnings of things her eyes and ears hadn't yet picked up, giving her that extra edge of alertness and that extra layer of defense.

But the Force, it seemed, was no longer with her.

Why wasn't it? Had she forgotten how to reach it, here in the wake of the Emperor's sudden death? Or had the trauma of that event shut her mind away from the Force, blocking her normal path to it?

Or had the Force never truly been with her at all? Had it always been simply the Emperor, acting through her, who had had that ability?

But that was a topic for another day's consideration. Right now, she had more immediate problems on her hands.

"There you are," she said calmly, turning around, making sure to keep her hands away from her body. Markko was standing in an open closet door about three meters back from her, a small blaster in his hand. "You know, it would have been a lot simpler if you'd just invited me to this party in the first place."

"Funny," Markko grunted, gesturing with his blaster. "Inskie. Don't try anything."

"Me?" Mara countered, turning and heading for the lighted room. "You're the one playing games. I thought we had a deal."

Somewhere in the past few seconds, the conversation from the room had ceased. Mara stepped through the door, to find a ring of eight people seated stiffly in chairs or on couches, all of them now turned to face her. Three of the men had their hands inside their coats, obviously clutching concealed blasters. "Hello," Mara greeted them. "Welcome to Markko's weekly game of Follow The Leader."

The first tail snorted. "Funny," he grunted.

"My name is Arica," Mara continued. "I'm the leader."

She looked at Markko as he stepped into the room behind her. "How about some fresh introductions, Markko? Starting with you."

"You're the leader," Markko reminded her dryly. "Why don't you start?" He hefted the blaster pointedly. "And before you answer, I should tell you that I checked the palace computer files after you left. There's no listing for any Arica Pradeux."

"Pradeux," one of the other men muttered. "There was an Alec Pradeux among Palpatine's advisors."

"No relation," Mara assured him. "I just borrow his name sometimes. It's useful in opening doors."

"So who are you?" Markko asked. "And whose side of the war are you on?"

Mara shrugged, trying hard to read the atmosphere in the room as she mentally flipped a coin. A meeting outside the palace certainly implied an anti-Imperial gathering. On the other hand, if Egron had enemies inside the palace—and what governor didn't?—this might just as easily be a pro-Imperial group he'd sanctioned.

Her flipped coin landed on its edge. "At the moment, neither," she told Markko. "I'm strictly an independent contractor."

"You working with Talon Karrde?" someone asked suspiciously.

Mara shook her head. "Never heard of him. Who is he?"

"A would-be smuggling chieftain," another man said with a snort. "One of a hundred scrambling to take advantage of the hole Jabba left when he got his fat throat squeezed."

Mara felt her throat tighten. Jabba the Hutt. Killed on Tatooine by—who else?—Luke Skywalker. No matter what she did, she couldn't ever seem to get away from him. "What does Karrde have to do with this?"

"Absolutely nothing," Markko said. "So you have no political leanings at all,

do you? I thought only brain-dead slugs refused to have opinions. Slugs, or cowards."

"Political opinions are a luxury I've never been able to afford," Mara countered evenly. She was on to his verbal combat techniques now, and she wasn't about to let herself be drawn out by the challenge in his tone. "Mostly, I've been busy staying alive. Where I stand depends on who's offering the best deal. Or who has the blaster in my back."

"The blaster currently in your back is mine," Markko reminded her, hefting the weapon for emphasis. "Does that mean you're working for me?"

Mara shrugged. "You have the blaster. I have Ghent. And I'm still waiting for those introductions."

For a long moment Markko studied her. "All right," he said. "My name is Markko. I'm an agent of the Rebel Alliance."

Egron snorted. "Trying to shake down an Imperial Governor is a risky proposition." "That's not actually what I had in mind," Mara said.

The Rebel Alliance. Even more or less prepared for it, the revelation still somehow came as a shock. "I see," Mara said, trying not to let the contempt show through. These were the people who had destroyed her life ... "And the computer system?" she asked. "Yours. I take it?"

"Another group's, yes," Markko said, nodding. "I was hired to inveigle my way into Egron's confidences so that I can be there when it's sliced. Once I've neutralized the most critical information, they're welcome to whatever's left."

"Generous of you," Mara gestured to the ring of other faces. "Where do they come in?"

"They're the local cell," Markko gave her an ironic smile. "Their job was to make sure you delivered Ghent as promised."

"Good," Mara said. "Consider their job finished."

She turned toward the door. "Where are you going?" one of the others demanded.

"I'll be at the southwest gate with Ghent in an hour and a half," she told Markko, ignoring the question. "Don't be late, and have the money ready."

She sent a look at the other Rebels over her shoulder. "And don't try to follow me," she added. "The next time I have to lose a tail, I'm likely to lose him a little more permanently."

Without waiting for a reply, she left the room.

No one tried to stop her. No one tried to follow her, either.

A minute later she was once again out in the cool night air, her head spinning with the possibilities. A captured Rebel computer. A complete Rebel cell.

And a high-level Rebel agent brought in just for the occasion.

She could do it. She knew she could. They trusted her, or at least realized they didn't have any choice in the matter. She could bring

Ghent to the palace, slice the computer, and then turn both the computer and Markko over to Governor Egron.

Maybe it would be enough to get her a job in the governor's local Intelligence Department. Probably not much of one, but at least enough to let her rejoin the fight against the Rebellion. It would be a chance to start building a life for herself again. Maybe even a chance to get Isard off her back.

Yes, this was going to work. And all because she'd decided to stay on Chiblas long enough to hear a concert.

Maybe the Force hadn't entirely deserted her after all.

Nevertheless, she took a long, circuitous route back to her hotel, watching the street behind her the whole way.



"Are you sure," Ghent muttered as they walked toward the muted lights of the palace's southwest gate, "that this is a good idea?"

"We'll be fine," Mara assured him, trying to sound like she meant

it. The plan had sounded terrific on her way back to the hotel. It had sounded equally good as she explained it to Ghent, his hair sticking up even more wildly fresh out of the shower as he'd tried to roll up the cuffs of the spare jumpsuit

he'd borrowed from her closet.

But now, actually walking up to the palace, it suddenly didn't seem quite so airtight anymore.

Especially as she had a strong suspicion that Markko's Rebel friends were moving in to fill the shadows behind them. If she couldn't convince Governor Egron that she and Ghent were on his side, a quick exit could be difficult.

The guards at the gate opened it without question or comment. Inside, they found Markko waiting for them, a half dozen stormtroopers in tow. He nodded silently at Ghent, then looked at Mara. "Follow me," was all he said.

They did so. The stormtroopers, Mara noted without surprise, fell into step behind them.

Markko led the way through a maze of dimly lit corridors, changing direction every couple of corners. It was probably not the most direct route to wherever they were going, but instead one carefully designed to confuse them as to where exactly they were, and—more importantly—which way was out.

Eventually, they reached a set of unmarked doors. Markko pushed them open, and the group stepped inside.

The room was much larger than the size of the doors would have suggested. It was built along the same lines as the reception room she'd spoken to Markko in earlier, with a high, domed ceiling supported by decorative arches rising up from the floor. This one seemed to be designed as an assembly or audience hall, with a raised platform near the far end and a throne-like chair resting atop it. Large paintings and ancient tapestries lined the carved stone walls, with sculptures set in niches or on small pedestals scattered around. It was a room clearly designed to impress visitors with Governor Egron's wealth, position, and culture.

And in the center of the room, laid out in front of the throne, was the captured computer system.

It was larger than Mara had expected from Markko's earlier description. Or perhaps that was just an illusion created by the racks and tables of examination and analysis equipment that had been arrayed in a wide ring around it, all of it connected to the computer with tangles of different colored cables. Markko and his buddies hadn't just been sitting around waiting for Ghent to show up and do their job for them. They'd tried their best to crack this particular damak nut before giving up.

Which meant she and Ghent really had them over the turret gun here. Chances were she could have doubled their fee, and Markko still would have agreed to it.

She looked at Ghent, wondering if he might be following that same line of thought. But no. He was looking at the computer the way an art connoisseur would look at one of the paintings or sculptures in the room. The thought of money probably hadn't even registered with him yet.

"There it is," a deep voice said from behind them.

Mara turned as an older man with a heavily lined face strode into the room past the group of stormtroopers now gathered beside the door. "This is Ghent, I take it?" the man added, studying the boy with obvious doubt.

"That's him," Mara said calmly. She'd never met this particular official, but his face had been among the files the Emperor had had her memorize years ago. "And you, I take it, are Governor Egron."

Egron looked at her as if eyeing a side dish he hadn't ordered. "Markko?" he asked.

"A friend of Ghent's," Markko explained. "She's handling the negotiations for his service."

Egron sent him a sharp look. "Negotiations?"

"It's all right," Markko said, soothing him with an upraised hand. "It's under control. Okay, Ghent, there's the computer. Get busy."

Wordlessly, his eyes still shining, Ghent crossed to the computer. For a minute or two he continued to gaze at it, his eyes tracing out some of the cable connections. Then, still without saying anything, he sat down in front of the main analysis console. Slowly at first, then picking up more and more speed, his fingers started caressing the keys.

"So you're his business manager, are you?" Egron's voice said in Mara's ear.

"Unofficially," Mara said, turning to face him. "It's a temporary job, but one I expect to be quite profitable."

Egron snorted. "Trying to shake down an Imperial Governor is a risky proposition."

"That's not actually what I had in mind," Mara said, glancing surreptitiously around. Markko was standing a respectful distance behind Ghent, watching him work, and none of the stormtroopers were within earshot. This was her chance to lay it all out for him. "Tell me, Governor—"

"Governor?" Markko called softly. "Would you come here, please?"

"Certainly," Egron nodded once at Mara, then brushed past her and crossed to Markko's side. Markko murmured something, and a moment later the two of them were in a deep conversation.

Mara turned away, a quiet alarm starting to sound in the back of

her mind. Did Markko suspect her planned double-cross of him and his Rebel friends? If so, he would make it his business to keep her from ever being alone with Egron, at least until he could feed the governor a story designed to cut the ground out from under her.

Which he might very well be doing right now, in fact. And from what she remembered of Egron's file, the governor might well choose to believe his supposed friend rather than Mara's Imperial recognition codes.

She glanced back at the door. And all of it taking place in a room with no way out except through six stormtroopers.

Time to find an alternative exit.

She began to drift around the audience hall, pretending to study the artwork. Egron's private office and living quarters would certainly include secret exits, but a public gathering room like this probably wouldn't. Her best hope would be a back door that had been covered by one of the tapestries and forgotten.

"Arica?" Markko called.

She turned around. Markko was still standing behind Ghent, gesturing Mara to join him; the governor had moved off and was prowling the edges of the computer equipment like a hungry wrix searching for a way into a bantha corral.

Mara walked over to Markko, keeping an eye on the stormtroopers as she did so. So far, there was no indication of special awareness on their part. "Yes?"

"The governor has agreed to your demand," Markko told her. "Two thousand an hour. I presume standard Imperial currency will be acceptable?"

"Perfectly," Mara said. "And now, let's discuss what you're going to pay us."

He frowned. "What are you talking about? I just said—"

"You said the governor is paying two thousand," Mara cut him off. "But you've got your own agenda here, right? Why should you get a free ride on his back?"

Markko exhaled noisily. "I don't believe this," he growled. "You have more simple, flat-out—" He strangled off the words. "Fine. Whatever you want." Spinning around in a neat about-face, he stalked away.

"Whatever you say," Mara murmured after him, making sure her satisfaction didn't show in her voice. How to cut short a conversation you didn't want to have, in one easy lesson: start talking about money.

Turning her back on the fuming Markko, Mara stepped to Ghent's side. "How's it going?" she asked.

No response. "Ghent?" she tried again.

This time, he looked up at her. "You say something?" he asked vaguely.

"I asked how it was going," she repeated. "You making any progress?"

"Some," he said. "It's kind of slow-going. I've never run into these encrypts before."

"I'm sure you'll get it," she said encouragingly.

"Oh, I know," he said distractedly, looking back down at the console.

"Let me know when you're getting close," Mara added quietly. "Just me. Understand?"

"Sure," he said. "Hey, you want to see something really cool? Watch this."

He punched a few keys and the lines of gibberish on one of his displays were replaced by a curving red-and-blue logo that twisted and turned like an air snake performing a ballet. Beneath the dance, a set of numbers and letters rocked back and forth as if they were spectators enjoying the show. "Isn't that neat?" Ghent said. "You ever seen anything like it?"

"Yes," Mara said between suddenly stiff lips. Yes, she had indeed seen that logo before. It was the emblem of the Sphaslariss Whisperers Corporation, a small, family-run company contracted by the Empire to create certain specialized military encrypts. And from the code number listed below the logo . . .

She looked at the computer, the skin on the back of her neck tingling. This was no captured Rebel computer, Sector Command level or otherwise.

She eased the lightsaber upward, carefully slicing through the stone at an angle. The Paparak cross-cut was an esoteric bit of engineering technique.

It was the primary control node from an Imperial Star Destroyer. And with that, the whole thing suddenly turned on its head. Markko wasn't looking to scorch some Rebel database before the information could be coaxed out. What he was going for here was nothing less than a full set of Star Destroyer control matrices, transmission patterns, and military encrypts.

She threw a look over at Markko out of the corner of her eye. No wonder he'd felt it necessary to try to squeeze Ghent as hard as he could to make sure the kid did the job. A coup like this for his Rebel friends would probably jump him two ranks on the spot. And right under an Imperial governor's nose, too.

An icy grip seemed to settle itself around her throat. Back at the Rebel house, she remembered belatedly, Markko had mentioned tapping into the palace computers to search out her Arica Pradeux alias. And he would have had no more than a few minutes to do the job between the time she left the palace and the time she found him at the Rebel meeting house.

And yet, by his own admission, he was only a pretty fair slicer. How could he possibly have gotten past the specialized encrypts into the personnel files that fast?

Answer: he hadn't, because someone else had done it for him. Someone who didn't need to slice the system, because that someone already had the necessary decrypts.

Or in other words, Governor Egron.

She looked at Egron, still pacing his restless circle around the room, the invisible hand around her throat squeezing a little harder. There was no reason for an Imperial governor to need or want military encrypts. There was certainly no reason for him to want any of the other information stored in a Star Destroyer computer.

Unless, of course, he intended to sell it.

She took a deep breath. So that was it. Markko wasn't simply

leading an unsuspecting Egron around by the nose. The governor had seen which way the wind was blowing through the Empire, and had made a deal with the Rebellion to take early retirement.

In fact, in all probability it was Egron who had arranged the whole thing. Everything from contacting Markko to securing the computer to locating a fringe slicer who could turn it inside out without anyone noticing.

Perhaps that was the real reason they'd kept him living on the streets for a week, in fact. By not trying to contact anyone in his distress, he'd effectively proven there was no one he could call. Which meant that, once he'd served his purpose, he could quietly disappear without anyone noticing or caring.

And if Ghent was slated to disappear, anyone who knew about him was certainly in line for the same one-way ride. Even someone who knew Imperial recognition codes.

Especially someone who knew Imperial recognition codes.

"Isn't that great?" Ghent said again. "I really like the way it—"

"Okay, that's enough," Mara said, dropping a warning hand onto his shoulder.

There must have been something in her voice or touch, because for a wonder he got the message. "Is something wrong?" he asked.

"Right now, everything is wrong," she told him grimly. "We're surrounded by enemies, Ghent. I need to find us a way out, and fast."

For a second she thought she'd made a mistake in saying anything. The kid's mouth dropped open, his eyes widening in shock, and Mara braced herself for the exclamation that would bring the whole crowd running to see what was going on.

But her instincts hadn't played her false. The mouth closed, the eyes shrank back to normal, and he gave her a microscopic nod. "Okay," he said. "What do you want me to do?"

"What I need most is time," she said. "Can you stall this operation any?"

He shrugged. "Sure. It was probably going to take me another half hour or so anyway."

"Make it an hour," Mara said, glancing around for inspiration. Stormtroopers gathered around the door, Egron and Markko wandering around impatiently . . .

In a room with stone walls, arched support beams, and hanging artwork.

It would be risky, on at least two different levels. But at this point they didn't have a lot of options. "Is there any way you can get this equipment to make noise?" she asked. "Nothing too loud, but like a buzzing or warbling or something?"

"Uh . . ." He looked around. "Yeah, I think so. You mean something really irritating?"

"Just something to cover up other reasonably soft noises," she told him. "Give me about five minutes, then get it started."

"Okay," he said. "Then what?"

She gave him a reassuring smile. "Don't worry. When we go, we go together."

Giving his shoulder another squeeze, she stepped back and moved toward where Egron was doing his circles. He saw her com-

ing and stopped. "Is he done?"

"No, but he's hungry," Mara told him. "I'd like to go get something for him to eat."

"He can eat when he's finished," Markko put in, coming in to join the conversation.

"Hungry slicers don't work nearly as well as happy, well-fed ones," Mara countered. "Or as quickly, either."

She shrugged. "But, hey, you're the ones paying the bill. If you want this to take an extra couple of hours, that's fine with me. I haven't got anywhere else I have to be."

Markko and Egron looked at each other. Mara caught Markko's tiny nod—"All right," the governor said. "But you're not leaving. I'll have something sent in."

Turning, he strode over to the stormtroopers. A few words, and two of the six about-faced and disappeared through the door.

Markko had already drifted away. Mara did so now, too, moving back to the wall and her earlier study of the hanging artwork. Only four stormtroopers left to deal with, provided she was ready to make her move before the others returned.

And that was going to depend on Ghent. If the kid got so wrapped up in his work he forgot to bring up the background noise she'd requested...

She was halfway around the room, studying a triangular canvas with lumpy paint and a vaguely Rodian look about it, when she first noticed the faint humming sound.

It started quietly, like an insect wandering around in the distance. But almost immediately the noise level began to increase. She looked around, pretending to be searching for its origin, and managed to be looking back at Ghent just as Markko and Egron reached him.

"What's that noise?" the governor demanded. "Is something wrong?"

"No, it's okay," Ghent assured them. "It's a Pertander feedback circle. Lots of security systems have them built in. Makes noise when someone tries to slice 'em."

"Can't you turn it off?" Markko asked, leaning over Ghent's shoulder as he studied the displays.

"Turn it off?" Ghent echoed, looking up at him in astonishment. "No, no. You want this to keep going."

"Why?" Markko growled.

"Because it's useful," Ghent said patiently. "The noise tells you how you're doing on the slice. See, if it raises or lowers in pitch—"

He launched into a technical discussion, but Mara didn't need to hear any more. Turning away again, she slipped her lightsaber from its hidden pocket, concealing it under the edge of her jacket. Ghent had done his part. Time for her to do hers.

She stepped close to one of the paintings, lifting her left hand to touch her fingers to the edge of the frame as if holding it steady for examination. Shifting her body slightly so that it blocked the view from both the door and the computer equipment, she placed the tip of her lightsaber against the wall and ignited it.

The snap-hiss sounded about ten times louder than usual. She tensed, senses alert for any sign that anyone else had heard it.

But between Ghent's animated explanation and the increasingly annoying squeal from his equipment, the sound had apparently

gone unnoticed. Keeping the handle flat against the wall so that none of the glowing blade would be visible, she eased the lightsaber upward, carefully slicing through the stone at an angle. The Paparak cross-cut was an esoteric bit of engineering technique, one of many the Emperor had taught her over the years, designed to weaken a stressed wall in such a way that it would hold together long enough for the saboteur to safely get clear of the resultant collapse.

She finished her cut and closed down the lightsaber. The next cut, she calculated, should be near the base of the support column three meters to her right. Sliding the weapon back into concealment, she moved casually toward the next painting.

A Paparak cross-cut for this size room would normally take no more than five minutes to set up. With the need to look casual about her wanderings, though, it was closer to twenty minutes later before she was ready.

There was one final set of cuts to make. Just to the right of a particularly interesting painting at the back of the room, she stealthily carved out a triangular opening that, once the stone was kicked out, would serve as a quick exit.

And it was time to go.

She returned the lightsaber to its pouch and began moving back toward Ghent, still drifting along like a bored business manager marking time until she could count the money. Governor Egron was still prowling, but Markko seemed to have taken up a permanent position behind Ghent's shoulder.

That would have to be dealt with. Fortunately, she had a pretty fair idea how to do that.

Markko looked over as she stopped behind Ghent's other shoulder. "Been enjoying the governor's art collection?" he asked.

"It's not too shabby," Mara said, glancing over Ghent's displays. "Tell me, Markko, how well do you actually know Governor Egron?"

"How do you mean?"

"I mean is there any chance he knows who you really are."

For a long moment he was silent. Ghent, predictably, kept working, apparently completely oblivious to the conversation. "Why do you ask?" Markko said at last.

"One of the paintings over there," Mara said, nodding toward the one beside the bolt-hole she'd carved in the wall. "You ever hear of cantrosh gas?"

"What is this, military class?" Markko growled.

"No, survival class," Mara retorted. "You know what it is or not?"

Markko hissed between his teeth. "It's a war gas. Spreads out quickly; highly poisonous to most species."

"Very good," Mara said. "Well, that particular painting has been set in a cantrosh-oxide-matrix frame. For extra credit, you want to tell me what happens if you hit an oxide matrix with, say, a blaster shot?"

Markko looked over at the governor. "He wouldn't."

"Why not?" Mara countered. "Not while he's in the room, obviously, unless he's got a breather mask on him or stashed away in that throne. And of course, the stormtroopers' filtration systems will protect them just fine. So back to the original question: any chance he knows who you really are?"

Markko was really quite good at keeping his emotions and thought processes from showing on his face. But again, enough

leaked out to show Mara that she'd hit the mark.

After all, an Imperial

governor who could turn traitor to his own government would hardly lose sleep over doing the same thing to another ally. "You seem to be the expert with this stuff," he said at last. "What do you recommend?"

"I recommend getting it out of here, that's what," Mara said tartly. "We unhook the painting from the wall, march it across the room, and tell Egron it goes or we do."

"And you think he'll just do it?"

"With all that lovely data still locked away where he can't get it?" Mara reminded him. "What else can he do? Ghent? Come on, Ghent, look alive."

Ghent blinked his way back to the real world. "What?"

"We're going for a walk," Mara told him, pulling back his chair. "Come on, get up."

"Wait a second," Markko said as Mara half pulled Ghent to his feet. "He's going with us?"

"Halt," the squad leader barked, swinging his blaster rifle toward them. "Identify yourselves." It would be quick work to cut down all four of them.

"Call it an exercise break," Mara said. "Besides, Egron might go ahead and have the stormtroopers shoot if it was just you and me, counting on being quick enough to haul Ghent out before the gas drifts this far across the room."

"Gas?" Ghent echoed, his jaw dropping. "What gas?"

"It's okay," Mara said, taking his arm. "It's under control. Come with us."

They started across the room. "Where are you going?" Egron called, his circling coming to a sudden halt.

"It's called exercise," Mara called back. "If you want to be useful, why don't you go see what's taking that food?"

Egron muttered something under his breath and turned his back on them. "Wait a second," Markko muttered. "We don't want him leaving the room."

"He won't risk Ghent's life," Mara reminded him, not breaking pace. "Check out that throne and see if you can find a breather mask hidden somewhere."

If Markko had had time to think about it, Mara knew, he would never have let her and Ghent get away from him, even just a few paces. But he was clearly a man used to following orders, and without even a whisper of protest he veered off and headed toward the throne. Mara kept going, wishing she could look over her shoulder and see what Egron and the stormtroopers were doing, but knowing she didn't dare. Ten more paces ... five ...

And then they were at the wall. "Get ready," she murmured, half turning to stand sideways to her triangular cut. Throwing one glance back across the room to make sure no stormtrooper rifles were being brought to bear, she lifted her right leg and threw a side kick as hard as she could into the stone.

And with a horrible crunch, the triangle shattered into a pile of broken rubble.

"Go!" she ordered, shoving Ghent through the opening and turning fully now to face her opponents. Egron was standing flat-footed, his mouth hanging open with bewilderment; the stormtroopers were reflexively dropping into firing crouches and scrambling to bring their guns to bear—

And Markko had the ugly, vicious look of a man who's just realized he's been conned.

And as Mara ducked back through the hole behind Ghent, there was a snapped order, and the wall around her began to shatter and spark with blaster fire.

That was a mistake. With the structural integrity already weakened by Mara's calculated lightsaber damage, the blaster bolts were all it took to push it over the edge. Even as Mara grabbed Ghent's arm, the entire wall began to collapse.

"Run!" Mara snapped, hauling the kid along the service corridor they now found themselves in. Chunks of stone were falling all around them, filling the corridor with debris and a choking rock

dust, and from the sound of it she guessed that the rest of the chamber was falling in on itself as well. Hopefully crushing the Star Destroyer computer in the process; but there was nothing else she could do about that now.

They picked and coughed their way to the end of the corridor, only to discover it was a dead end. "Now what?" Ghent managed between coughs.

"Get ready to run," Mara told him, pulling out her lightsaber and igniting it. Two quick slashes and a kick, and they were through. The room on the far side was deserted, but through the dwindling sound of crunching masonry from behind them she could hear shouts and orders and an occasional distant scream.

They crossed the room to the door, and Mara looked cautiously out into an equally deserted hallway. "Quick and quiet," she murmured to Ghent as she closed down the lightsaber. If everyone else in the palace would just concentrate on the scene of the disaster and leave them alone ...

They got two more hallways before their luck ran out. And it ran out to the tune of a roving squad of four stormtroopers.

"Halt," the squad leader barked, swinging his blaster rifle toward them. "Identify yourselves."

Mara hesitated. Her lightsaber was nestled half-hidden against her side, the bottom end held in her cupped right hand. In the close confines of the hallway it would be quick work to cut down all four of them before they realized what was happening.

But these were Imperial soldiers, members of the order she had once so proudly been a part of. And even though they served a traitorous governor, they themselves had done nothing that deserved death. "Imperial agent on official business," she said instead. "Recognition code Besh-Senth-isk-Twelve."

The stormtroopers straightened noticeably. "Pattern Nen-Peth?" the leader asked.

"One-three-seven-seven," Mara said.

"Acknowledged," the leader said, lifting his rifle. "You may pass." Ghent was staring at the stormtroopers with a look of stunned disbelief. Mara nudged him, startling him back to life, and together they slipped past the squad. "Wow," he breathed as they turned another corner into yet another deserted hallway. "Where'd you learn all that stuff?"

He suddenly gave her an even more startled look. "Are you a Jedi?"

"Hardly," Mara assured him grimly. The only Jedi in the business these days was ... "Come on," she said, refusing to even think that name anymore today. "The door we came in by should be right up here."

At which point, it suddenly occurred to her, they would have to get past Markko's group of Rebels. But there was no point thinking too far ahead. The roving stormtroopers clearly hadn't heard that Mara and Ghent were wanted, but the outer gate guards might be on a different communications loop. If they were, and if they'd gotten the message, the official-business ploy wasn't going to work a second time.

Ahead she could see the exit door, with no one in sight. Either the guards were all outside or else they'd been summoned to the scene of the audience room collapse. Breathing a little easier, she headed toward it—

"Not so fast, traitor."

She froze in place. The voice had come from behind them ... and even twisted with fury, she had no difficulty recognizing it.

Slowly, keeping her hands in sight, she turned around. "Hello, Governor," she greeted him. "You're looking well."

"You mean I'm looking alive?" he snarled. "Yes, I am. So sorry to have spoiled your plan."

"You didn't, really," Mara assured him, looking him over. His face was drawn and pale, his clothing as covered in dust as hers and Ghent's were, and there was blood oozing through the powder from a variety of small cuts and scrapes.

But the blaster he was pointing at them was steady as a rock.

"By the way, where's your friend Markko?" Mara asked, just for something to say. "Too far from the door, was he?"

"Don't you wish," Markko said, stepping into view from a side corridor that intersected their hallway a few paces closer to the exit. He was in even worse shape than Egron, and the blaster in his hand had the uneven waver of a drunken snake trying hard to appear sober.

But what he lacked in steadiness, he was more than making up in determination. Heavily favoring his left leg, he was nevertheless limping steadily toward them, wincing with pain at each step.

"You misunderstand my goal," Mara told him, keeping her voice calm as she eased away from Ghent toward the hallway wall behind her. Two blasters on them; but Markko's unsteady hand was the distinctly lesser danger, at least until he got closer. "I had no particular wish to kill either of you," she added. "Or even damage you, for that matter."

She looked back at Egron. "All I wanted was the computer," she said, waving with her left hand in the direction of the collapsed room, using the distraction of the gesture to move another step back. Her lightsaber was still balanced half concealed in her right hand, her

sleeve gun resting ready against her left forearm. "You don't need military encrypts, Governor. Nor have you any right to them."

"It's a moot point now, isn't it?" Egron shot back bitterly. "You saw to that. The whole ceiling came down—huge pieces of rock falling all over the place. The computer's completely wrecked."

"Good," Mara said. "I hope at least the stormtroopers—"

And right in the middle of the sentence, she swung her lightsaber up and around, igniting it in the same motion, and hurled it straight at the governor.

Egron screeched, his reflexive shot going wide as he ducked away in panic from the flying lightsaber. Mara dropped into a crouch, yanking out her sleeve blaster as Ghent gave a yelp of his own. Egron fired again, this shot going even wider than the first.

Mara's shot was right on target.

"Freeze!" Markko's ragged voice said.

Carefully, Mara turned her head, her gun still pointed at Egron's motionless body, her mind black with chagrin. Ghent's yelp a second earlier hadn't been from surprise, as she'd assumed, but from the shock of having Markko's arm suddenly around his throat.

The arm was still there, pinning him upright against Markko's body.

And Markko's blaster was pressed very steadily to the side of his head.

"You see?" Markko ground out. "I can be clever, too. Drop the gun."

"I'm impressed," Mara said, making no move to comply. "The limp, the wavering gun—very nicely done."

"Thank you," Markko said. "I assumed that when faced with a choice of targets, you'd go first for the more threatening one."

"Absolutely," Mara said, starting to feel rather weird about the direction this conversation was taking. It was like they were two professionals talking shop.

Maybe they were. "I see you've been trained too," she said.

"Maybe almost as well as I've been."

"Possibly better," he suggested.

"Possibly," Mara said. "But you've made one mistake."

"Oh? What's that?"

Mara nodded slightly toward his gun. "You're targeting the wrong person."

"No, I don't think so," Markko said. "You seem to care about this kid. I don't think you'd like to watch him die."

Ghent made a gurgling sound in the back of his throat. His eyes were bulging, pleading wordlessly with her.

But Ghent didn't know how to think these things through. Mara did. She hoped. "Not particularly, no," she conceded. "But no more than I'd dislike watching any other innocent bystander get killed for no useful reason. Fact is, Markko, I hadn't even met Ghent before tonight. We're hardly long-lost friends or anything."

Markko studied her for a moment. "In that case," he said at last, "we may be in something of an impasse."

"I'm afraid so," Mara agreed. "If you shoot Ghent, you lose your shield. More to the point, you'll never get your blaster around to target me before I can take you down. Take my word for it."

"I believe you," Markko said tightly. "And if I just target you right now ...?"

"Same thing happens," Mara told him. "You should have shot me at once instead of trying to take a hostage."

"Yes," Markko murmured. "I agree: definitely a mistake. But I wanted to

Mara gave the sound of his retreating footsteps a few more seconds, then straightened up. Blaster still in hand, she stepped past Egron's body and retrieved her lightsaber. "Come on, Ghent," she said, closing it down and slipping it back into its pouch. "Door's right there. Let's go."



They were three blocks from the palace, and the sounds of emergency vehicle sirens were fading behind them, before Ghent finally spoke. "Would you really have let him kill me?" he asked.

"If he'd really wanted to kill you, there wasn't anything I could have done to stop him," Mara told him. "I'm sorry, but that's just the way it was. All I could do was try to persuade him that you didn't mean anything to me, so that he couldn't use you as a lever."

"But you are an Imperial agent?"

Mara swallowed. "I was once," she admitted. "At the moment ... let's just say I don't really have a home right now."

Ghent seemed to digest that. "So what do we do now?"

"We get out of here," Mara said. "Too many people saw us in there. Once they get the pieces sorted out, they'll be looking for both of us. What will it take to get you home?"

"I don't know," Ghent said. "Enough money for a ticket, I guess. Do we have time to go back to your hotel for my backpack?"

"That might not be a good idea," Mara said, shaking her head. "I didn't think Markko's people had trailed me back there earlier. But now I know Markko's smarter than I thought."

She frowned back over her shoulder. Come to think of it, what had happened to the group of Rebels who she thought had been forming up outside the palace as she and Ghent went in? There'd been no sign of them on the way out, certainly there had been no hindrance to their escape. Had they all scattered for the woods when the alarm went off?

Or had they merely reconvened outside Mara's hotel in hopes of belated revenge? "No, it's definitely not a good idea," she concluded. "Sorry."

"That's okay," Ghent said with a sigh. "I kind of figured that, actually."

"For whatever it's worth, I'm leaving most of what I own back there, too," Mara said, sifting through her pockets. "Any idea what a ticket back to Sibisime would cost?"

"Uh ... no, not really," he said. "Probably eight hundred. Maybe nine."

Mara grimaced. Nearly all she had, in other words. Back to square zero, it seemed. "Here," she said, offering him the credits. "I hope this will be enough."

"But I can't take your money," he protested.

"Take it," Mara ordered, in no mood to be argued with. "I can work for my passage off this rock. Just go home, all right?"

Reluctantly, he took the credits. "But how do I pay you back?"

"Don't worry about it," she told him, glancing back behind them again. Still no sign of pursuit. "Maybe we'll run into each other

find out who and what you were."

"That's easy enough," Mara said. "I am justice." She nodded her head toward Egron's body. "He tried to betray the Empire. I pronounced him guilty, and executed him."

"Just like that?"

"Just like that," Mara confirmed.

Markko's lips puckered. "I see I really am in trouble."

Mara looked at Ghent's terrified face. A Rebel operative, an enemy of the Empire and everything she believed in ... and a scared civilian. A kid, caught up in trouble not of his own making.

Where did her duties lie here?

Once, she'd known the answer to that question. Now, all the lines had gone fuzzy.

But Ghent had come here trusting her. Trusting her.

And with the Emperor dead, and the Empire currently in the

**"My name is Talon Karrde. Don't worry. I'm not out to get you. I'm here to offer you a job."
"I've had enough of job offers for awhile, thanks."**

hands of people like Isard, maybe that was all that mattered.

"Not necessarily," she told Markko. "I've discharged my duty by executing a traitor. I have no particular quarrel with you."

Markko snorted. "Of course not. A Rebel agent; and someone who defines herself as Imperial Justice has no quarrel with me?"

"Let me put it this way," Mara said. "I'll offer you a deal. You let Ghent go and put your blaster away, and all three of us walk away from here, alive and free. You insist on playing Rebel hero ... and I'm the only one who walks."

Markko's eyes flicked to Egron, back to Mara. "Why should I trust you?"

Mara shrugged. "Why not? I've got what I wanted: a dead traitor, and military encrypts safely out of Rebel hands. I can afford to be generous."

She lifted her eyebrows. "And as I said, I don't particularly like seeing innocent bystanders get killed. Especially when they're just kids."

For a long moment Markko just stared at her. Mara held her position, heart thudding in her throat, watching his eyes for the shaved second of warning that would be all she would get if he decided his pride was worth more than his life.

And then, slowly, he lifted his blaster away from Ghent's head, his other arm relaxing its pressure on the boy's neck. Ghent gave another gurgle and dropped like a thin sack onto his knees on the floor. For another long second Markko just stood there, his gun pointed at the ceiling, his eyes on Mara's, wordlessly inviting her to renege on her promise.

But Mara made no move; and taking a deep breath, Markko turned the blaster around and slid it back into his coat. "Until next time," he said, giving her a slight bow. Turning his back on them, he strode to the side corridor he'd appeared from and disappeared down it.

again some day. In the meantime—"

She pointed straight ahead. "The spaceport's that way. Think you can find it by yourself?"

"Sure," he said. "What about you?"

She pointed to the right. "Recruiting for transport hands is handled at the guild office down that street. Watch yourself, all right?"

"Sure," he said. "You too."

For a second he looked like he was going to try to hug her. But Mara simply turned and walked away. He would be all right, she knew.

He would be all right, she hoped.



The boy got another two blocks toward the spaceport, with the mysterious woman long out of sight, before Talon Karrde decided it was safe to approach. "Excuse me," he said, stepping out of the shadows where he'd been waiting. "Are you Ghent?"

The boy froze. "Yes?" he said nervously. "Who are you?"

"My name is Talon Karrde," Karrde introduced himself. "Don't worry. I'm not out to get you. I'm here to offer you a job."

Ghent snorted. "I've had enough of job offers for awhile, thanks." He frowned suddenly. "Are you the one who sent me the ticket?"

"No," Karrde assured him. "Though I admit your sudden disappearance did throw me off track for a few days. I'd been preparing to approach you back on Sibilisine when you suddenly left."

"Okay," Ghent said, looking merely puzzled now. "So what do you want?"

"As I said, to offer you a job," Karrde said. "I have an organization of some modest size that engages in moving cargo and information from one place to another."

"Smugglers?"

Karrde shrugged. "More or less. We find ourselves in need of a good slicer; and our sources indicate that you're one of the best."

He gestured in the direction of the spaceport. "If you'd care to discuss it, my ship's berthed nearby. No obligation, of course."

"Well..." Ghent glanced over his shoulder. "I don't know. There are some people looking for me. Imperials and some other group. She said they might still be looking for me."

"The second group were members of the Rebel Alliance," Karrde told him. "And yes, both parties seem to have initiated retrieval efforts in your wake."

Ghent looked over his shoulder again. "You mean they're still back there?"

"Not anymore," Karrde assured him with grim amusement. "My people have dealt with both groups."

Ghent blinked at him. "So it would be safe to go back to the hotel and get my stuff? She said we'd have to leave everything."

"We can go anywhere you like," Karrde assured him. "Shall I get us a landspeeder?"

"No, it's not far," Ghent said. "We can walk. It's this way."

"Speaking of the woman," Karrde said as they set off. "She was too far away for me to get a good look at her. Who was she, anyway?"

"I don't know," Ghent said. "She never told me her name. All she said was that she once worked for the Empire, but not anymore."

"Interesting," Karrde said thoughtfully. "And you say she left some things back in your room?"

"Yeah, but I don't think we can get them to her," Ghent said. "She said she'd be getting work on some ship. I don't know which one."

"Pity," Karrde murmured. "Still, you never know. We might run into her again someday."

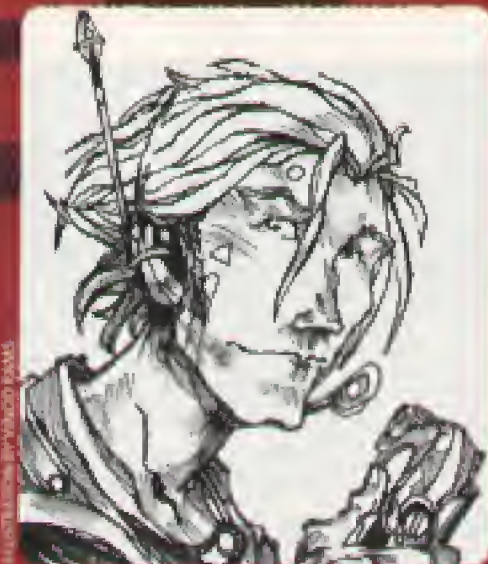
"That's what she said," Ghent told him. "And you know, she had a lightsaber. You think she could be a Jedi or something?"

"You never know," Karrde said again.

And even if their paths never did cross again, he didn't add, there might be something among her abandoned belongings that would give him a clue as to her identity.

That could be useful someday. One never knew.

Signaling his silent ring of guards to move in close, Karrde and Ghent headed off into the night. **S**



Ghent: Male Human Tech Specialist 5/Slicer 5; Init +1 (Dex); Def 19 (+8 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 38/10; Atk +4 melee (1d3+1, punch) or +6 ranged; SQ Research, instant mastery (Spot), expert (Computer Use), tech specialty (computer specialist +1), decode +2 (+4), skill mastery (Computer Use, Disable Device), virus (crack); SV Fort +2; Ref +6; Will +6; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 0; Rep +4; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 9. Challenge Code: D.

Equipment: Backpack, variety of custom-built and modified computers.

Skills: Appraise +13, Bluff +6, Computer Use +25, Craft (computer) +17, Craft (droid) +13, Disable Device +17, Forgery +9, Gamble +4, Gather Information +15, Hide +5, Knowledge (alien species) +7, Knowledge (organized crime) +7, Move Silently +6, Pilot +5, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Binary, Repair +22, Search +13, Sense Motive +4, Speak Basic, Speak Binary (understand only), Speak Bith, Speak Rodese, Spot +5.

Feats: Gearhead, Skill Emphasis (Computer Use, Disable Device, Gather Information, Repair), Trick, Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

See *Star Wars Gamer* magazine issues #3 for more information about Ghent, Talon Karrde, and the Smuggler's Alliance and #5 for the slicer prestige class.

GALACTIC POWER

The Light and Dark Sides of Coruscant

THE VAST GALAXY IS STILL TOO SMALL FOR ALL OF ITS WORLDS TO COEXIST PEACEFULLY. The Republic Senate does what it can to bring about non-violent solutions through diplomacy from the city-planet of Coruscant. Of course, wherever there is civilization, there is a criminal underworld lurking in the shadows.

The Republic Senate

Half the seats in the Senate Rotunda stand empty. The delegates who once filled them

are gone, their worlds withdrawing from the Republic because the people are disgusted with the many failures of the Senate to effect change in itself, let alone in the rest of the galaxy. Most have been lured to Count Dooku's Separatist movement; some have simply stopped attending the useless Senatorial sessions. The governing body of the Republic is withering away.

SUPREME CHANCELLOR PALPATINE

For a politician whose career once seemed doomed to obscurity, Palpatine has done well. His senatorial journals have become popular reading for political science students. He formed friendships in the circles of the elite, in military science academies, and even with a Jedi Master, the esteemed

Jorus C'baoth. When he was nominated to replace Supreme Chancellor Valorum, it seemed all but a foregone conclusion that he would receive the appointment.

Palpatine had never made it a secret that he scorned those who abused their authority to line their pockets. When he became Supreme Chancellor, he appointed some of his most trusted confidantes to special committees aimed at dealing with corrupt politicians. Since the Battle of Naboo, his administration has made great strides in winnowing out the worst of the lot, but corruption is still deeply ingrained in the Senate.

Despite his best efforts, Palpatine has seen thousands of worlds join the growing Separatist movement.



Palpatine: Male Human Noble 4; Init +0; Def 13 (+3 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP 21/13; Atk +3 melee (1d3, punch) or +3 ranged; SQ Favor +2, bonus class skill (Intimidate), Inspire confidence, resource access, coordinate +1; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +7; SZ M; FP 3; DSP 0; Rep +10; Str 10, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 16. Challenge Code: B.

Equipment: Chancellor's robes, offices and apartments on Coruscant, private shuttle, private space transport.

Skills: Bluff +6, Computer Use +9, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (galactic politics) +11, Knowledge (Jedi lore) +10, Knowledge (Naboo) +11, Listen +4, Profession (bureaucrat) +10, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Bothan, Read/Write Calamarian, Read/Write Gran, Read/Write Rodese, Read/Write Ryl, Search +3, Sense Motive +10, Speak Basic, Speak Bothan, Speak Calamarian, Speak Gran, Speak Rodese, Speak Ryl, Spot +4.

Feats: Fame, Skill Emphasis (Diplomacy), Trustworthy, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

BROKERS

BY J.D. WINTER

MAS AMEDDA, VICE CHANCELLOR

The Vice Chancellor of the Republic Senate is stern, severe, and humorless with no patience for dishonesty, qualities that do not make him popular with the Senators or lobbyists. He has been accused of misusing his power, though there has never been any proof. Any other being in his position would have stepped down by now, but Mas Amedda refuses to allow his detractors the victory. When his term of office ends, he plans to move quietly back to his home, take a wife, and disappear from public view.

Mas Amedda feels a responsibility to the office of Supreme Chancellor. He was fond of Finis Valorum but felt the former Chancellor was out of his depth. He believes Chancellor Palpatine is, like himself, above petty bickering and backstabbing. Only a handful of Senators—including Bail Organa and Padmé Amidala—meet his approval.



SUPREME CHANCELLOR'S GUARD

Relatively new to Coruscant are the Supreme Chancellor's Guard—imposing, highly trained warriors equipped with state-of-the-art weapons. With the increased threats from the Separatist terrorists, Captain Prid Shan demanded additional funding to upgrade the equipment and training of select Senatorial Guards. Although Supreme Chancellor Palpatine was embarrassed by the notion of trained soldiers acting as his personal bodyguards, after a few close calls, even he had to admit that he could use the added protection.

The result is the Supreme Chancellor's Guard: red-garbed security experts devoted to keeping the Chancellor safe. Their main duty is to protect Palpatine, but they are also capable of safeguarding visitors; they are present at nearly every meeting and may be dismissed only by Palpatine himself.

Mr. Sith Goes to Coruscant



Supreme Chancellor's Guard: Male

Human Soldier 3; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 16 (+4 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 27/14; Atk +6 melee (2d8+2, force pike) or +5 ranged (3d8, heavy blaster); SQ DR 5 (armor); SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2; SZ M; FP 1; DSP 0; Rep +2; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10. Challenge Code: B.

Skills: Intimidate +6, Knowledge (Coruscant) +4, Knowledge (galactic politics) +4, Listen +6, Pilot +4, Read/Write Basic, Search +2, Speak Basic, Spot +6, Treat Injury +3.

Equipment: Force pike, heavy blaster, guardsman's armor*, comlink.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light, medium, powered), Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (force pike), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibroweapons).

* Guardsman's armor requires the Armor Proficiency (powered) feat to operate without suffering a -2 armor check penalty to all skill checks and attack rolls, and has a maximum Dex bonus of +2. It provides DR 5 and a +2 equipment bonus to Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

Mas Amedda: Male Chagrian Diplomat 8; Init +6; Def 12 (+2 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP —/14; Atk +5 melee (1d3+1, punch) or +4 ranged; SQ Amphibious, low-light vision, radiation resistance; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +9; SZ M; FP 1; DSP 0; Rep +3; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14. Challenge Code: C.

Equipment: Official robes, offices and apartments on Coruscant, comlink, datapad.

Skills: Appraise +7, Bluff +8, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +14, Knowledge (Champala) +7, Knowledge (galactic politics) +13, Profession (bureaucrat) +9, Read/Write Chagri, Sense Motive +6, Speak Basic, Speak Calamarian, Speak Chagri, Speak Quarren.

Feats: Iron Will, Persuasive, Skill Emphasis (Knowledge: bureaucracy), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

BAIL ORGANA, ALDERAANIAN SENATOR

Senator Organa has been described as a "courageous pacifist" because he stands up for what he believes even as he abhors violence. Organa prides himself on being able to see both sides of any argument. He is renowned throughout the Republic for his ready assistance in relief efforts on war-torn planets and his sometimes-dramatic diplomatic efforts to prevent armed conflicts.

On his native Alderaan, the handsome Senator is considered an extremely eligible bachelor, but Bail Organa shows a marked lack of interest in courtships on the grounds that his diplomatic duties must come first.



Bail Organa: Male Human Noble 6; Init +0; Def 14 (+4 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP 30/12; Atk +4 melee (1d3, punch) or +4 ranged; SQ Favor +2, bonus class skill (Bluff), inspire confidence, resource access, coordinate +1; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +8; SZ M; FP 2; DSP 0; Rep +5; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 14. Challenge Code: B.

Equipment: Senatorial robes, apartments and offices on Coruscant and Alderaan, personal starship.

Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +9, Computer Use +5, Diplomacy +14, Entertain (oratory) +6, Knowledge (Alderaan) +7, Knowledge (cultures) +10, Knowledge (galactic politics) +14, Knowledge (scholar) +8, Pilot +2, Profession (bureaucrat) +9, Read/Write Basic, Ride +5, Sense Motive +13, Speak Basic, Speak Calamarian, Speak Shyriiwook. **Feats:** Fame, Iron Will, Skill Emphasis (Diplomacy, Knowledge: galactic politics, Sense Motive), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

ORN FREE TAA, CORRUPT TWI'LEK SENATOR

This corpulent Twi'lek Senator from Ryloth is responsible for more influence peddling, toadyism, and abuse of power than any other Senator. He sits at the center of a circle of cronies and supporters ranging from the top to the bottom of the political ladder. With his contacts—both official and clandestine—Orn Free Taa could not only ruin any political career but also destroy lives. He's driven enemies to "suicide" and has enough dirt on every politician to ensure he'll never be removed from office.

Senator Orn Free Taa learned the art of diplomacy from the recognized masters, the Hutts. Though Ryloth is technically free of



Orn Free Taa: Male Twi'lek Diplomat 9/ Crimelord 4; Init -1 (Dex); Def 14 (+5 class, -1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 22/5; Atk +7/+2 melee (1d3+1, punch) or +5/+0 ranged; SQ Low-light vision, contact (x2), resource access, inspire fear -2; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +11; SZ M; FP 2; DSP 12; Rep +12; Str 13, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 16. Challenge Code: E.

Equipment: Hold-out blaster, encrypted comlink, encrypted datapad, opulent apartments and offices on Coruscant.

Skills: Appraise +7, Bluff +17, Computer Use +3, Diplomacy +22, Gather Information +20, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +5, Knowledge (galactic politics) +13, Knowledge (Ryloth) +5, Profession (bureaucrat) +10, Read/Write Ryl, Sense Motive +13, Speak Basic, Speak Huttese, Speak Lekku, Speak Ryl. **Feats:** Infamy, Persuasive, Skill Emphasis (Diplomacy, Gather Information, Profession: bureaucrat), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

Hutt rule, the Hutts still have a great deal of influence on the Twi'lek homeworld thanks largely to beings like Orn Free Taa, but the Twi'lek always had his own agenda. When the Republic stepped in with economic sanctions to "encourage" the Hutts to seek better markets elsewhere, Orn Free Taa was one of the first to step forward and aid the Republic.

The Commerce Factions

The commerce factions are displeased with the restrictions the Republic places on them, but not so much that they're eager to tie their fortunes to the success of the Separatists. If the Confederacy of Independent Systems fails, they stand to lose vast sums



Shu Mahi: Female Gossam Noble 8; Init +1 (Dex); Def 16 (+5 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 31/11; Atk +6/+1 melee (1d3, punch) or +7/+2 ranged; SQ Favor +3, bonus class skill (Bluff), inspire confidence, resource access, coordinate +2; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +10; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 13; Rep +5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 14. Challenge Code: C.

Equipment: Encrypted comlink, encrypted datapad, personal starship, apartments and offices on Coruscant and Castell.

Skills: Appraise +13, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +12, Knowledge (business) +14, Knowledge (Castell) +7, Knowledge (galactic politics) +14, Profession (bureaucrat) +15, Profession (merchant) +10, Read/Write Gossam, Sense Motive +9, Speak Basic, Speak Geonosian, Speak Gossam, Speak Huttese, Speak Neimoidian.

Feats: Influence, Iron Will, Persuasive, Skill Emphasis (Profession: bureaucrat), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Nute Gunray: Male Neimoidian Diplomat 12; Init +0; Def 14 (+4 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP —/10; Atk +5/+0 melee (1d3–1, punch) or +6/+1 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +9; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 8; Rep +7; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 14. Challenge Code: D.
Equipment: Viceroy's robes, mechno-chair with remote-control unit, multichannel comlink, private shuttle, command freighter.
Skills: Appraise +19, Bluff +9, Computer Use +5, Diplomacy +17, Knowledge (business) +19, Profession (merchant) +19, Read/Write Neimoidian, Sense Motive +8, Speak Basic, Speak Neimoidian.
Feats: Infamy, Skill Emphasis (Appraise, Diplomacy, Knowledge: business, Profession: merchant), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

of credits. Count Dooku has had to guarantee exclusive rights to the resources of various Separatist worlds, lucrative profit margins, and relaxed shipping regulations to gain the commerce factions' support.

SHU MAI, COMMERCE GUILD PRESIDENTE

Commerce Guild Presidente Shu Mai is a financial mastermind with the heart of an assassin. As the leader of the influential Commerce Guild, she directs trillions of credits every day and has long since stopped caring about the lives those figures represent—if she ever did.

Castell, Shu Mai's homeworld, was gripped by worldwide economic depression for decades. Gossams killed each other over jobs, passage offworld, and even food. The Commerce Guild saw an opportunity and funneled money into Castell's economy by buying up huge tracts of land. Thousands of Gossams went to work for the Commerce Guild just to be allowed to live on their ancestral lands.

Shu Mai used her keen analytical mind and ambition to work her way up the ranks to Chief of Property Resources. From this position she could have arranged to sell the land back to her people at a reasonable price, or even just give it back to them. Instead, Shu Mai used her own hard-earned

credits to purchase the land from the Commerce Guild herself, then raised the rent. The Commerce Guild's Chief of Staff was so impressed with her ruthless initiative that he promoted her. Shu Mai stopped rising through the ranks only when she hit the top, leaving behind a trail of broken careers and a suspicious accident or two.

NUTE GUNRAY, TRADE FEDERATION VICEROY

Nute Gunray is endlessly greedy and ruthlessly efficient, the product of a traditional Neimoidian upbringing. Raised in a grub hatchery, he was forced to fight for his share of food and taught to hoard what he could not consume.

The Viceroy got an education in true power when he joined forces with Darth Sidious to blockade the planet of Naboo. Gunray had assumed that the Sith was interested in the same thing he was—credits. The blockade became an invasion, then an occupation, the Jedi intervened, then another Sith appeared . . . and the Viceroy realized he was a pawn of someone far more powerful. When the smoke cleared, Darth Sidious left Nute Gunray to face Republic justice alone.

Despite dozens of hearings, the Viceroy pleaded innocent and refused to resign his post or claim any knowledge of the Sith.



Gunray retained his position, his wealth, and his authority—and vowed never again to have anything to do with a Sith Lord.

PASSEL ARGENTE,

CORPORATE ALLIANCE MAGISTRATE

Although the Corporate Alliance is a member in good standing of the Republic Senate, Senator Argente has already decided to join Count Dooku's Separatists. As a Koorivar, Argente holds a grudge against the Republic. Thousands of years ago, when their primary star became unstable, Argente's people migrated from their home system to the Kooriva system, where they have lived for centuries, adopting the planet's name. Two thousand years before the Battle of Naboo, Kooriva's native species successfully petitioned the Republic for sole proprietorship of the planet. The Kooriva became wandering merchants for centuries, until they gained enough influence to reverse the Republic's decision.

Ten years after the Battle of Naboo, the Corporate Alliance is charged with regulating sales and distribution of countless corporations. Argente is disgusted with the Senate's trade laws and bureaucracy. He longs for the glory days—wandering from planet to planet, buying low in one system and selling high in another.

Passel Argente: Male Koorivar Diplomat 6/Noble 2; Init +0; Def 13 (+3 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP 9/11; Atk +4 melee (1d3, punch) or +4 ranged; SQ Favor +1, bonus class skill (Gather Information), inspire confidence; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +9; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 8; Rep +3; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 14. Challenge Code: C.
Equipment: Hold-out blaster, encrypted comlink, datapads, private starship, estates and offices on Koorivar, apartments and offices on Coruscant.
Skills: Appraise +14, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +13, Gather Information +8, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +8, Knowledge (business) +16, Knowledge (Kooriva) +6, Profession (bureaucrat) +13, Profession (merchant) +7, Read/Write Koorivar, Sense Motive +4, Speak Basic, Speak Huttese, Speak Koorivar, Speak Ryl.
Feats: Skill Emphasis (Appraise, Knowledge: business, Profession: bureaucrat), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).





Wat Tambor: Male Skakoan Tech Specialist 8/Noble 3; Init +0; Def 16 (+6 class); Spd 10m; VP/WP 52/13; Atk +8/+3 melee (1d3, punch) or +8/+3 ranged; SQ Atmospheric requirements, research, instant mastery (Spot), expert (Profession: bureaucrat), tech specialty (mastercraft droids +1, mastercraft electronic devices +1), favor +2, bonus class skill (Repair), inspire confidence, resource access; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +9; SZ M; FP 2; DSP 3; Rep +3; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 14. Challenge Code: D.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, Skakoan environmental suit (with integrated comlink and datapad), private starship, apartments and workspaces on Skako.
Skills: Appraise +15, Computer Use +17, Craft (droids) +18, Craft (electronic devices) +18, Craft (repulsorlift engines) +15, Craft (space transports) +15, Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (business) +11, Knowledge (galactic politics) +11, Knowledge (Skako) +11, Profession (bureaucrat) +15, Read/Write Binary, Read/Write Skakoform, Repair +20, Sense Motive +6, Speak Basic, Speak Binary, Speak Skakoverbal, Speak Shuusesese, Speak Verpine.

Feats: Gearhead, Skill Emphasis (Craft: droids, Craft: electronic devices, Craft: space transports, Diplomacy), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Special Qualities: Atmospheric Requirements—Skakoans cannot breathe oxygen or survive in normal air pressure. A Skakoan not wearing an environmental suit designed for his species suffers 2d6 points of wound damage each round; a Fortitude save (DC 20) halves the damage. Conversely, a Skakoan can operate normally in a high air pressure environment without suffering ill effects.

WAT TAMBOR, TECHNO UNION FOREMAN

Wat Tambor is the enigmatic Foreman of the Techno Union, preeminent designers and developers of the galaxy's emerging technologies. The Techno Union includes such respected companies as Baktoid Armor Workshop, Haor Chall Engineering, Republic Sienar Systems, Kuat Systems Engineering, TaggeCo, BlasTech Industries, and the Corellian Engineering Corporation. Their combined influence is a lynchpin of the Republic, which relies on the starships, bacta tanks, air cars, landspeeders, droids, and millions of other technological wonders. Were the Techno Union to throw its support to the Separatists, the Republic would be hard pressed to recover.

Tambor is an intriguing figure, swaddled from head to toe in his Skakoan environ-



San Hill: Male Muun Diplomat 10; Init +1 (Dex); Def 14 (+3 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP —/9; Atk +4 melee (1d3–1, punch) or +6 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +11; SZ M; FP 3; DSP 3; Rep +3; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 12. Challenge Code: D.

Equipment: Encrypted comlink, encrypted datapad, personal starship, apartments and offices on Coruscant and Muunilinst.

Skills: Appraise +19, Computer Use +8, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (bureaucracy) +16, Knowledge (business) +19, Knowledge (galactic politics) +16, Knowledge (Muunilinst) +7, Profession (bureaucrat) +18, Read/Write Muun, Sense Motive +10, Speak Basic, Speak Huttese, Speak Lekku (understand only), Speak Muun, Speak Ryl.

Feats: Iron Will, Skill Emphasis (Appraise, Knowledge: business, Profession: bureaucrat), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

mental suit, his eyes hidden behind thick goggle-like lenses. His species comes from Skako, an industrial world where the atmospheric pressure is so great that only natives can survive without environment suits. When a Skakoan goes out into the galaxy, he must protect himself from explosive decompression. That Foreman Tambor has ventured off his homeworld is a testament to how seriously he takes his commitment to the Separatists.

SAN HILL, INTERGALACTIC BANKING CLAN CHAIRMAN

San Hill of Muunilinst is enigmatic and pragmatic. As a species, Muuns are extremely greedy but cautious. Under San Hill's leadership, the IBC has funded countless profitable ventures and corporations; few of his investments fail to pay off. The major function of the IBC is to administer loans, set interest rates, and regulate stock market prices for the entirety of the Republic. They also deal with the Hutts, who use the IBC to launder money.

San Hill supports the Separatists, but not exclusively. He's certain that if Separatist extremists keep up their violent attacks, the Republic will be forced to go to war. In that event, both sides will need weapons—and for weapons, they will need credits. If the IBC remains neutral, they can sponsor loans to both parties. Short of war, San Hill believes that the Republic will be much more willing to recognize the legitimacy of the Confederacy of Independent Systems if it doesn't hurt the Republic financially.

The Coruscant Underworld

Shrouded in gloom, the under-city is a place of vice and crime, where one survives on force of will and primal cunning. Those who live in Coruscant's underworld dream of buying, stealing, or murdering their way out to a place where they can see the sky and not have to watch their backs.

ELAN SLEAZEBAGGANO

Elan Sel'Sabagno (known to almost everyone as Elan Sleazebaggano) abandoned his once-promising medical career in favor of turning a few quick credits in Coruscant's seedy nightclubs. He is a Balosar, a species renowned for its criminals, cheats, and scoundrels. Though he had left that life

behind to earn a medical degree on Coruscant, his species' reputation caught up to him, and he soon found himself stealing medical supplies from the university's stores and selling them for Hat Lo, one of Coruscant's up-and-coming underworld figures. When one of Sleazebaggano's instructors accused him of the thefts, the young Balosar assaulted the teacher and went into hiding in the labyrinthine under-cities.

Now Sleazebaggano puts his rudimentary medical training to use behind the bar of a seedy nightclub. After a few drinks, he finds it's easier to over-charge patrons or talk them into purchasing glitterstim or death sticks, which he's still peddling for Hat Lo. Although Balosars have a higher tolerance for such toxic substances, Sleazebaggano is becoming a death stick addict. He doesn't care that other species don't have the same ability to shrug off the effects of death sticks and has been sharing them with his coterie of club-hopping thrill-seekers.

Dex's Diner

Although his diner isn't the upscale restaurant Dexter Jettster had in mind when he relocated to the vast city-planet, it's no dive either. Dex shopped around for a while before settling on this particular location. Dex's Diner was a popular eatery in a decent part of a bustling monad—until the world planners built another monad atop that one, and Dex suddenly found his establishment officially part of Coruscant's seedy under-city. Dex still gets plenty of business, and the diner is not so far down that he has to worry about dangerous creatures wandering in and eating the customers.



Dexter Jettster

Dexter Jettster is an old friend of Obi-Wan Kenobi. Genial with his friends and gruff with just about everybody else, he doesn't like troublemakers. Known throughout the city sector as a decent cook, he's also a seasoned smuggler and former arms dealer who came to Coruscant to comfort a sick relative. Dexter used his visit as an excuse to go legitimate.

Dex first met Obi-Wan when he was a Padawan. Dex was running a rough-and-tumble bar on the remote Outer Rim mining world of Ord Mantell, and he used the bar as a cover for running guns. Shortly thereafter, Dex opened a weapon shop on the Outland Transit Station, where he supplied mercenaries and bounty hunters.

When a strike team of Bando Gora Force wikkies raided the OutTS, Dex decided he'd had enough. He sold the last of his stock to Jango Fett and used the proceeds to fund his trip to Coruscant. For many years it had been his dream to open a swanky restaurant in the best part of the city-planet. Although he's stayed on the straight-and-narrow, Dex hasn't lost touch with all of his contacts. **M**

Dexter Jettster: Male Ojomo Scoundrel 6; Init +3 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 13 (+4 class, -1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 36/14; Atk +6 melee (1d4+2, knife) or +3 ranged (3dB, heavy blaster); SQ +2 species bonus to cold-weather Survival checks, illicit barter, lucky (2/game session), precise attack +1; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; SZ M; FP 3; DSP 2; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 13. Challenge Code: C. **Equipment:** Butcher's knife, heavy blaster (under counter), Coruscant diner. **Skills:** Appraise +9, Bluff +6, Computer Use +4, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (business) +5, Knowledge (scholar) +9, Knowledge (streetwise) +9, Pilot +6, Profession (cook) +4, Profession (merchant) +10, Read/Write Ojomo, Repair +6, Sense Motive +5, Speak Basic, Speak Huttese, Speak Ojomo, Spot +5. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Skill Emphasis (Appraise, Diplomacy, Gather Information), Trustworthy, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Elan Sleazebaggano: Male Balosar Tech Specialist 1/Scoundrel 2; Init +1 (Dex); Def 13 (+2 class, +1 Dex); Spd 10m; VP/WP 10/9; Atk +0 melee (1d3-1, punch) or +2 ranged; SQ illicit barter, lucky (1/game session); SV Fort -1, Ref +5, Will +1; SZ M; FP 0; DSP 8; Rep +0; Str 9, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 14. Challenge Code: A. **Equipment:** Flashy clothes, stash of illegal substances (ryll spice, glitterstim, death sticks). **Skills:** Appraise +6, Bluff +7, Computer Use +6, Diplomacy +7, Escape Artist +2, Gather Information +8, Knowledge (alien species) +6, Knowledge (biology) +5, Knowledge (organized crime) +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +6, Profession (bartender) +2, Read/Write Balosar, Sense Motive +4, Speak Balosar, Speak Basic, Speak Huttese, Speak Ryl, Treat Injury +4. **Feats:** Skill Emphasis (Sense Motive, Treat Injury), Trustworthy, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).



STAR WARS®

ROLEPLAYING GAME



A Revised Rulebook Companion

BY JO WIKER

The latest version of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* is available now. Thanks to customer feedback, the revised rules capture the action of the *Star Wars* galaxy better than ever. Moving from the old rules to the new requires virtually no adjustment, but die-hard gamers will want to know just how to tweak their characters to take best advantage of the revised edition.

For players, adapting a beloved character could mean anything from adjusting a skill bonus here and adding a feat there, to completely rebuilding your character from scratch. In most cases, you'll be able to adapt a villain or supporting character with just a few notes in the margin.

Core Rulebook Characters

To adapt characters created using the original rules to the revised rules, just use the following guidelines. There are no changes to levels, experience, or ability scores.

SPECIES

The existing species' language-related skills and special abilities have been modified slightly. Only Ewoks underwent a

major change: The Primitive quality now affects an Ewok's starting feats instead of conferring certain penalties. Although the Mon Calamari's Amphibious quality does exactly the same thing as before, it was renamed Breathe Underwater.

CLASS

The most sweeping change is the addition of the tech specialist heroic class. Doctors, technicians, and mechanics might fair better with this new class. Players of such characters might like to recreate them from the ground up or trade some levels of existing classes to levels of tech specialist.

Starting feats for some classes have changed. The fringer, Force adept, Jedi consular, and Jedi guardian now have new lists of starting feats.

CLASS FEATURES

Each of the heroic classes has changed slightly. A few, notably the scout, have gained special abilities. Other abilities have new names.

The following tables summarize how each heroic class has changed at each level.

Each class also receives a greater number of starting credits. You can either reroll your starting total using the new method or give your character additional credits as listed for each heroic class.

Fringer

The fringer's adaptive learning ability is now more accurately called "bonus class skill," and is earned at different levels. Barter remains unchanged, but the fringer's bonuses to jury-rigged repairs and Survival checks now come at different levels. The defense bonus stays the same, but the Reputation bonus is decreased. Instead of starting with proficiency in blaster pistols, the fringer is now proficient with primitive weapons. The feats Gearhead, Spacer, and Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, or slughtrowers) were added to the fringer's bonus feat list.

Additional Credits: 103 × 500 credits

Noble

Although the noble loses a point of Defense and about half her Reputation bonus, she gains the ability to call in many more favors



than before. Even more remarkable is the noble's newfound ability to acquire gear or credits using resource access. The command ability, which relied on Charisma, has been replaced with cooperate, which gives the noble greater bonuses when aiding another (aside from attack rolls).

Additional Credits: 1d3 × 1,000 credits

Scoundrel

Don't bemoan the seemingly huge reduction of the scoundrel's Defense bonus and the loss of sneak attack. The more powerful lucky ability replaces better lucky than good, and precise attack could prove to be more useful than sneak attack ever was. Also, Headstrong joins the list of bonus feats.

Additional Credits: 1d3 × 500 credits

Scout

At first glance it seems like the scout lost no abilities. The truth is that skill mastery, while still acquired at the same levels, allows a choice of only one skill each time it is gained instead of a number of skills equal to your Intelligence bonus. Although the scout loses about one point of Defense and Reputation, he gains three all-new abilities and more bonus feats. The feats

Cautious, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Rugged, and Sharp-Eyed join the scout's list of bonus feats.

Additional Credits: 1d4 × 500 credits

Soldier

Of all the classes, the soldier seems to have made out the best. Already the lord of bonus feats, the soldier picks up another one at third level to account for the loss of medium and heavy Armor Proficiencies. Most notable, with the exception of a Defense bonus, is the expanded list of bonus feats to choose from. The added feats are: Armor Proficiency (medium or heavy), Improved Critical, Improved Martial Arts, Starship Dodge, and Starship Operation (choose one).

Additional Credits: 1d4 × 500 credits

Force Adept

Like the fringer, the Force adept has lost proficiency with blaster pistols. It's a small price to pay considering her boosted Force weapon ability, extra feats, and all-new Force secret ability. Like her Outer Rim cousin the fringer, the force adept's Defense bonus remains unchanged. All force users now can choose the order in which they

gain the three main Force-user feats: Alter, Control, and Sense.

Additional Credits: 1d3 × 500 credits

Jedi Consular

Although the Jedi consular still gains the healing ability at 8th level, it is arguably more powerful now that it can increase the amount of damage healed. It might seem that the Jedi consular gained no bonus to Defense. While this is technically true, the deflect (defense) ability can boost the consular's Defense bonus at the cost of a move or attack action.

Additional Credits: none

Jedi Guardian

With the new Jedi Master prestige class, it might seem useless to gain any more levels of Jedi guardian than you need to. The truth, however, is that Jedi guardians are now the masters of deflecting blaster bolts. A 20th-level Jedi guardian is unmatched in her ability to stop and redirect blaster fire. The reduction of the Jedi guardian's Defense bonus is balanced with the deflect (defense) ability.

Additional Credits: none

Fringer

Level	Special Abilities Lost	Special Abilities Gained	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	—	Bonus class skill	—	—
2nd	—	—	—	—
3rd	Adaptive learning	Jury-rig +2	—	-1
4th	Jury-rig +2	Bonus class skill	—	-1
5th	—	—	—	—
6th	Adaptive learning	Jury-rig +4	—	-1
7th	—	Bonus feat	—	-1
8th	Jury-rig +4	Bonus class skill	—	-1
9th	Adaptive learning	Jury-rig +6	—	-1
10th	—	—	—	-1
11th	—	—	—	-1
12th	Jury-rig +6, adaptive learning	Bonus class skill	—	-2
13th	—	Jury-rig +8	—	-1
14th	—	Bonus feat	—	-1
15th	Survival +6, adaptive learning	—	—	-2
16th	Jury-rig +8	Bonus class skill	—	-2
17th	—	—	—	-1
18th	Adaptive learning	Survival +6	—	-2
19th	—	—	—	-2
20th	Survival +8, jury-rig +10	Bonus feat	—	-2





New Species

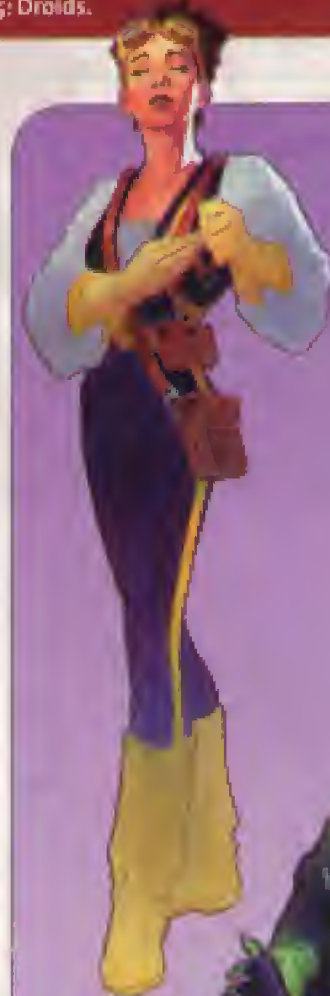
The *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised rulebook adds Duros, Gamorrean, Kel Dor, Quarren, and Zabrak as new playable species. Players can also select species from Chapter 14: Allies and Opponents at the GM's discretion. It's possible for more experienced players to create droid heroes using the droid-creation rules in Chapter 15: Droids.

Noble

Level	Special Abilities Lost	Special Abilities Gained	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	Call in a favor	Favor +1	-1	-2
2nd	Inspire confidence +1	Inspire confidence	-1	-3
3rd	Call in a favor	Favor +2, resource access	-1	-3
4th	Command +2	Coordinate +1	-1	-3
5th	Call in a favor	—	-1	-3
6th	Inspire confidence +2	Bonus feat	-1	-4
7th	Call in a favor	Favor +3	-1	-4
8th	Command +3	Coordinate +2	-1	-4
9th	Call in a favor	Bonus feat	-1	-4
10th	Inspire confidence +3	—	-1	-5
11th	Call in a favor	Inspire greatness	-1	-5
12th	Command +4	Favor +4	-1	-5
13th	Call in a favor	Coordinate +3	-1	-5
14th	Inspire confidence +4	Bonus feat	-1	-6
15th	Call in a favor	—	-1	-6
16th	Command +5	Favor +5	-1	-6
17th	Call in a favor	—	-1	-6
18th	Inspire confidence +5	Coordinate +4	-1	-7
19th	Call in a favor	Bonus feat	-1	-7
20th	Command +6	Coordinate +5	-1	-7

Scoundrel

Level	Special Abilities Lost	Special Abilities Gained	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	—	—	-2	—
2nd	Better lucky than good	Lucky (1/game session)	-3	-1
3rd	—	Precise attack +1	-2	—
4th	—	—	-3	-1
5th	Sneak attack +2d6	Bonus feat	-2	-1
6th	—	Lucky (2/game session)	-3	-2
7th	—	—	-2	-1
8th	—	—	-3	-2
9th	—	Precise attack +2	-2	-2
10th	—	—	-3	-3
11th	—	—	-2	-2
12th	—	—	-3	-3
13th	—	Lucky (3/game session)	-2	-3
14th	Sneak attack +3d6	Precise attack +3	-3	-4
15th	—	Bonus feat	-2	-3
16th	—	—	-3	-4
17th	—	—	-2	-4
18th	—	Lucky (4/game session)	-3	-5
19th	—	—	-2	-4
20th	—	—	-3	-5



SKILLS

There are a few new skills and Force skills in Chapter 4: Skills, as well as some old skills with new names:

- **Balance.** A last-minute deletion from the original rulebook.
- **Gamble.** Profession (gambler) didn't quite capture the flavor of gambling as seen in Expanded Universe sources.
- **Drain Energy.** Originally from *The Dark Side Sourcebook*.
- **Force Lightning.** The way Force lightning is used in the movies and the Expanded Universe is much more like a skill than a feat. If your character has the feat, you can simply change it to Skill Emphasis (Force Lightning), as the skill is usable untrained.
- **Force Strike.** Force Push was vague about whether a character should get a Dark Side Point for using it. Unlike Force Push, which this skill replaces, Force Strike only does damage. Move Object is the Force skill you should use if you want to move another being. Using Force Strike to harm a living being always gives the Force-user a Dark Side Point.
- **Illusion.** Originally from *The Dark Side Sourcebook*.

FEATS

Chapter 5: Feats has many new feats at the expense of a few old ones. All the heroic classes now get at least one bonus feat now. When adapting a player character, recalculate the number of feats he receives, then reselect your feats, incorporating as many of his existing feats as you like.

Some of the other changes include:

- **Deflect Blasters** is now a Jedi class ability rather than a feat.
- **Force Lightning** is a skill instead of a feat.
- **Martial Artist** is now Martial Arts, and is the prerequisite for three other Martial Arts feats: Improved, Advanced, and Defensive. The damage die type provided by each individual offensive Martial Arts feat has been reduced, but each version improves the number of dice and threat range by 1.
- **Zero-G Combat** is now Zero-G Training.
- **Low Profile** only provides a penalty to Reputation checks as opposed to limiting your level-based Reputation advancement.

The bonuses from feats like Alertness and Trustworthy have been categorized as aptitude bonuses, which don't stack. Force-

using characters will be glad to see several new feats that provide aptitude bonuses to Force skills.

The new Surgery feat gives heroes without access to a bacta tank or Jedi healer a chance to recover quickly from deadly injuries.

EQUIPMENT

Chapter 7: Equipment has many new items for heroes to spend their credits on. Double-check all of a character's equipments' entries to be sure what, if any, details about the item has changed.

Any armor worn by a character no longer provides a bonus to Defense. Instead, it provides Damage Reduction (DR). A character's Defense is always calculated from class levels, Dexterity modifier, natural armor, and size—but not armor equipment. To adapt armor not found in the revised rulebook, subtract 2 from the Defense bonus. This gives you a pretty accurate Damage Reduction rating.

HEROIC CHARACTERISTICS

The average character was a bit on the short, heavy side. The new Random Height and Weight table addresses this oddity. If you think your character is shorter and heavier than you envisioned, you can use the new table.

Scout

Level	Special Abilities Lost	Special Abilities Gained	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	—	—	+1	—
2nd	—	—	+2	—
3rd	—	Heart +1	+1	+1
4th	—	—	+1	—
5th	—	Extreme effort	+1	—
6th	—	Evasion	+1	+1
7th	—	—	+1	+1
8th	—	Bonus feat	+1	—
9th	—	—	—	+1
10th	—	—	+1	+1
11th	—	Heart +2	—	+1
12th	—	Bonus feat	+1	+1
13th	—	—	—	+1
14th	—	Heart +3	—	+1
15th	—	—	—	+2
16th	—	Bonus feat	—	+1
17th	—	—	—	+1
18th	—	Heart +4	—	+2
19th	—	—	+1	+2
20th	—	—	—	+1



Seize the Opportunity


The *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised rules include a combat option called "Attacks of Opportunity" to which many new feats relate. This rule can give you one free attack per round under certain circumstances, usually when a melee opponent has lowered her defenses.



Finishing Touches

If you have a character that was created using resources other than the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* rulebook, you might still have some questions about one or two aspects of your character. None of the changes in the revised rulebook are so

sweeping that these other resources lose their value.

The prestige classes that are included underwent virtually no changes, except for the Starship Ace (previously the Starfighter Ace). This class was updated to allow ace space transport pilots too. 

Soldier

Level	Special Abilities Lost	Special Abilities Gained	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	—	—	+1	—
2nd	Armor Proficiency (medium)	—	+1	+1
3rd	Armor Proficiency (heavy)	Bonus feat	+1	—
4th	—	—	+1	—
5th	—	—	+2	—
6th	—	—	+1	—
7th	—	—	+2	—
8th	—	—	+2	—
9th	—	—	+2	+1
10th	—	—	+2	—
11th	—	—	+3	—
12th	—	—	+2	+1
13th	—	—	+3	+1
14th	—	—	+3	—
15th	—	—	+3	+1
16th	—	—	+3	+1
17th	—	—	+4	+1
18th	—	—	+4	+1
19th	—	—	+4	+1
20th	—	—	+4	+1

Force Adept

Level	Special Abilities Lost	Special Abilities Gained	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	Alter	Force training	—	—
2nd	Sense	Force training	—	—
3rd	—	Bonus feat	—	+1
4th	Control	Force training	—	+1
5th	Force weapon +1d4	Force weapon +1d8	—	—
6th	—	Skill Emphasis	—	+1
7th	—	—	—	+1
8th	—	—	—	+1
9th	—	Bonus feat	—	+1
10th	—	—	—	+1
11th	—	Force secret	—	+1
12th	—	Skill emphasis	—	+2
13th	Force weapon +2d4	Force weapon +2d8	—	+1
14th	—	Bonus feat	—	+1
15th	—	—	—	+2
16th	—	Force secret	—	+2
17th	—	—	—	+1
18th	—	Skill Emphasis	—	+2
19th	—	—	—	+2
20th	—	Bonus feat	—	+2

The New Jedi

Of all the heroic classes, the Jedi underwent the most changes. The resulting classes better reflect the abilities Jedi exhibit in all the *Star Wars* movies. Players with Jedi heroes will be glad to receive Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber) at 1st level now. Heroes can also now choose the order in which they acquire the Sense, Alter, and Control Force feats. The loss of the bonus Jedi

Master feat is balanced not only with the ability to gain levels of the Jedi Master prestige class at a lower level but also with a healthy dose of bonus feats. Although the bonus lightsaber damage ability remains the same, it has been moved from its own column and into the special abilities list.

Jedi Consular

Level	Special Abilities Lost	Special Abilities Gained	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	Sense	Force training, deflect (defense)	—	—
2nd	—	Bonus feat	—	-1
3rd	Alter	Force training, deflect (attack)	—	-1
4th	Control	Force training	—	-1
5th	—	Deflect (extend defense & attack)	—	-1
6th	—	—	—	-2
7th	—	—	—	-2
8th	—	—	—	-2
9th	—	Skill Emphasis	—	-2
10th	—	Deflect (defense), block	—	-3
11th	—	Bonus feat	—	-3
12th	—	—	—	-3
13th	Jedi Master	Deflect (attack)	—	-3
14th	—	Skill Emphasis	—	-4
15th	—	Deflect (defense)	—	-4
16th	—	Bonus feat	—	-4
17th	—	Deflect (attack)	—	-4
18th	—	—	—	-5
19th	—	Skill Emphasis	—	-5
20th	—	—	—	-5

Jedi Guardian

Level	Special Abilities Lost	Special Abilities Gained	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	Control	Force training, deflect (defense)	-1	—
2nd	—	Bonus feat	-2	-1
3rd	Alter	Force training, deflect (attack)	-1	-1
4th	Sense	Force training	-2	-2
5th	—	—	-1	-1
6th	—	Deflect (extend defense & attack)	-2	-2
7th	—	—	-1	-2
8th	—	Bonus feat	-3	-3
9th	—	Deflect (defense), block	-1	-2
10th	—	—	-2	-3
11th	—	Deflect (attack)	-1	-3
12th	—	Bonus feat	-2	-4
13th	Jedi Master	Deflect (defense)	-1	-3
14th	—	—	-2	-4
15th	—	—	-1	-4
16th	—	Deflect (attack)	-2	-5
17th	—	Deflect (defense)	-1	-4
18th	—	Bonus feat	-2	-5
19th	—	Deflect (attack)	-1	-5
20th	—	—	-2	-6





All's Fair in Life and Stratego

How to Win at the New *Star Wars* Board Games

BY ROB DAVIAU

With the release of *Attack of the Clones* come new games, and Hasbro's 2002 *Star Wars* board games run the gamut from simple to challenging. Here's a look at four of the new games and their best basic strategies. *Epic Duels* offers the highest level of strategy and tactics for dedicated gamers. *The Game of Life: A Jedi's Path* and *Jedi Unleashed* are straightforward games that offer light strategy for serious gamers but are easy for less sophisticated gamers to learn. *Star Wars Stratego* presents a greater challenge, and the new powers in the game offer fresh opportunities for *Stratego* players to outwit their opponents.

Epic Duels

Epic Duels uses special playing cards to act out miniature warfare. Each player selects a *Star Wars* character and takes the deck of cards for that character. Then choose a location (say, the Cloud City carbon freezing chamber), place your figures there, and start fighting. On your turn, you move and then get two actions (either draw a card or play a card). Most are attack/defense cards, but each character has a dozen special cards that define that character's abilities and strategy. Characters have damage points, and the first one to run out loses. If your supporting characters are all defeated, their cards can be used to heal your main character.

Experienced gamers will take to *Epic Duels* in no time flat. One game takes about 25 minutes; it plays well with teams and can serve as an introduction to miniature and trading card games. Of all the new *Star Wars* board games, *Epic Duels* offers the greatest depth of strategy. It includes basic trading card game elements such as drawing, discarding, and performing actions, but it also incorporates miniature gaming elements such as line-of-sight and tactical movement.

GENERAL STRATEGY

Avoid your opponent while you draw cards. Once you get a hand you like, move in. In the meantime, use your supporting characters (who all have distance weapons) to harass and pin down your opponent's characters. Set up your figures so that your main character is protected and the supporting characters stand watch over rows and columns of spaces. Keep an eye on your opponent's hand size, as she will probably move in when she gets to 6 or 8 cards. Make sure you have an escape plan if the attack does not go as you expected; you'll need a few turns to draw up and recover from a plan gone awry.



Obi-Wan Kenobi & CLONE TROOPERS

Except for Boba and Jango, Obi-Wan has the greatest ability to move around the board, so there's no need to keep him near the action until you are ready. *Jedi Attack* and *Force Quickness* allow you to move just about anywhere in a single turn. But Obi-Wan's other cards are what offer real finesse. *Force Control* lets Obi-Wan move all characters up to three spaces each. You move them in any order and can use this ability to remove blockers, pin characters, bring your main target adjacent to you, shove opponents out of the way, get your allies behind cover, and other interesting effects. Do not underestimate this card. Also, you can use *Jedi Mind Trick* to get any card back from your discard pile. This is handy when things go wrong and you need another *Jedi Block* or *Force Control*. Finally, save *Force Balance* for the end of a big attack, when you have little or nothing left in your hand. It forces everyone to discard all their cards and draw a new hand of 3 cards.



YODA & CLONE TROOPERS

Use Yoda's Force abilities to block opponents, toss them around, and soften them up. Use *Insight* to look at your opponent's hand, then *Force Lift* to keep the enemy immobilized until your opponent discards 3 cards. If your foe is pinned, come in with attack cards. When your foe gets going again, use another *Force Lift* to put him back down. Yoda doesn't have a lot of strong attack cards, but he does have many ways to prevent opponents from reacting to his attacks. Don't forget *Force Rebound*, which turns an opponent's attack against him. Always act like you are holding it, even if you are not. It will make opponents think twice about attacking you.



HAN & CHEWIE

Unlike many characters, Han and Chewie are a true combination. Use Han to hit and fade, jump out from behind obstacles, play a card, and then beat a *Heroic Retreat*. Hide Han behind Chewie, since the Wookiee has a lot of damage points and defense cards. Keep Chewbacca alive until you get a chance to blast an enemy with *Bowcaster Attack*. *Wookiee Instincts* lets you search through your draw pile for *Bowcaster Attack*, and Han's *Never Tell Me the Odds* not

only damages multiple opponents but also lets you shuffle your discard pile back into your deck, giving you a second chance to play both Bowcaster Attack and Wookiee Instincts. If things get too hot for Han and Chewie, play It's Not Wise to throw an enemy out of range and rough them up in the process.



LUKE & LEIA

Like Han and Chewie, Luke and Leia work well as a duo: Lead with Luke, or use Children of the Force to get both into the action. Then fade back and heal up Luke with Luke's In Trouble. While you are refilling your hand, use I Will Not Fight You to keep your opponent from stocking up on powerful attack cards. Once you draw Justice, it is time to send Leia in. Her Latent Force Abilities card packs quite a punch. When she's defeated, Luke's Justice becomes an Attack 10, enabling him to finish off most opponents.



MACE WINDU & CLONE TROOPERS

Mace is most powerful with a full hand of cards, so do everything to stay near your maximum hand size. Battlemind cards have a value equal to your hand size, so they can be Attack/Defend 9 with a full hand of cards. Use Mace's other special cards, like Masterful Fighting and Wisdom to keep Mace along the edge of the action while he draws cards. Hit and fade while drawing for key cards. If an opponent surrounds Mace, play Whirlwind to damage a number of foes, then Wisdom to fade back and draw another card. While all this is happening, use your Clone Troopers to weaken your opponents. You don't need them for Mace's victory.



ANAKIN & PADMÉ AMIDALA

Anakin shows hints of the Sith Lord he will become. Anakin's Wrath can defeat any evil supporting character instantly, with no defense. Use to eliminate some (but not all) of an opponent's supporting characters. As long as your opponent has one supporting character, that character's attack cards cannot be used to heal damage. Try to get one each of Anger and Calm, and save them as your last two cards. Play Anger, which causes you to discard all but one card (Calm), then play Calm to retreat from battle and draw until you have a hand of 5 cards. Anakin's normal attack cards are also powerful, so even a few can keep the pressure on. Keeping Padmé alive is helpful but not necessary. Once her two special cards are played, the rest are best used to heal, since Anakin has limited blocking ability.



BOBA FETT & GREEDO

These two specialize in causing damage when opponents think they are safe. Boba Fett has a number of options for paralyzing and defeating opponents. Use Rocket Retreat to move to a space where Boba Fett can target a cluster of opponents. Then use Thermal Detonator to do 4 damage to each character in the group. Once your opponent is softened up, use Wrist Cable to keep the enemy



The Game of Life: A Jedi's Path

It looks like the standard Game of Life, but there's a bit more going on here. You gather skills in the Force in one of four categories—Logic, Intuition, Fighting, and Energy—as you make your way to your Jedi Trials. Along the way there are "Dark Paths" which can give you lots of skills but also give you Dark Side chips. If you go down three Dark Paths, you become a Sith. At the end of the game, the Sith and Jedi with the most skills fight to see who rules the galaxy. Good tends to win more often than evil, although it won't look that way during the game.

If you are going to go evil, go very evil. You are rewarded at the end for the number of "Dark Side" chips you have. The worst place to be is stuck having 2 or 3 Dark Side chips—you are weak either way. As a Sith-in-training, you need enough Fighting skill to pass your Dark Trial. Your Master will leave you and take his skills away, so keep in mind what abilities you will lose near the end of the game.

If you are going to be good, you need to have strength in two skills for the final duel. You need to win only one of the challenges, but the Sith champion can ignore your strongest skill. Make sure your second strongest is good enough.

Logic skill allows you take the Logic side path and helps in the Trials. The same is true for Intuition. Fighting helps if you are a Sith, and on most missions. Energy helps you get through the board faster and gives you extra skills if you land on the right spaces.

This is a great twist on a classic board game that's not much harder to play than the original Game of Life.



Jedi Unleashed

Jedi Unleashed is a quick game that's all about fighting. It's perfect for a lunch hour or a gaming appetizer before a main course of multi-hour game play. Novice gamers will find Jedi Unleashed easy to play, and veterans won't be disappointed. After all, you get to be on both sides of the conflict between good and evil. This game is set in the Geonosis arena from the finale of *Attack of the Clones*. Each player controls one Jedi (randomly dealt out before the game) and all players take turns controlling the bad guys. Your Jedi's goal is to defeat all the bad guys. The bad guys' goal is to defeat the other players' Jedi.

Some basic tactics are obvious: Move your Jedi to a square where he can attack a number of enemies on the same turn; Attack with Darth Tyrannus and Jango Fett first, since they have the best chance of defeating Jedi.

The only object of the game is to be the last Jedi alive. Defeating a dozen enemies with one Jedi makes you nothing but a target. A good tactic is to spread your kills around to all your characters early on. That way, none of your characters is a prime target, and losing one is not such a heavy blow. Late in the game, you want to make a run with one character and then get that Jedi off to a clear part of the board, away from opponents who can eliminate him. One effective tactic is to guard the prime-point-winning Jedi with one or two of your other characters, forming an honor guard.

Also, the Reek roams the arena, and you can try to ride the beast to stomp opponents. Riding the Reek is dangerous but can pay off handsomely if it goes well. Try to "ride-and-conquer" in the mid-game. If it works, it's late enough in the game to run and hide with your now-winning Jedi—but not so late that you can't recover from some bad dice rolling. Also, Jedi on the Reek are hard to defeat, since they first have to be bucked off and then defeated on the ground. Therefore, you might want to hide your high-point scorer in the most dangerous place of all—on the Reek.

from drawing or playing too many cards. Once you are sure you have your opponent reeling, play **Saber Dart** to finish him (you draw 3 cards if you use it to eliminate an opponent) and then **Rocket Retreat** to safety. Greedo isn't as versatile but can be deadly if forgotten. **Sudden Arrival** does not count as an action and can move him anywhere on the board. Follow this up with either a two-card attack followed by a **Sudden Arrival** to retreat or a one-card attack and then the **Desperate Shot**. This can be a powerful tactic, but could be the end of Greedo if it doesn't work.



DARTH VADER & STORMTROOPERS

Vader's damage points alone make him a strong character, plus he has two healing cards. Add in the fact that his cards allow him to attack someone anywhere on the board, and he is one tough Sith Lord. **Wrath**, **Throw Debris**, and **Choke** all do damage to characters anywhere on the board—no hiding, no defense—and there are multiple copies of each. Use some of these early on to eliminate supporting characters (**Choke**) or to whittle an opponent down. If possible, keep one or two to finish off a wounded enemy, since there is no defense against a special card. Vader's most dangerous card is **All Too Easy**, which does 20 points of damage if not blocked. If you get this, go for an opponent with few or no cards. Or use **Your Skills Are Not Complete** to look at their hand and make them discard any cards that might stop **All Too Easy**.



THE EMPEROR & IMPERIAL GUARDS

Do not make the mistake of charging into battle with the Emperor. He's strong attacking from afar, and his low damage points make him weak in head-to-head combat. Your attack cards consist of multiple copies of **Force Lightning** and supporting character attacks. Always keep one Imperial Guard back next to the Emperor, away from the action. You have some standard attack cards, but use them only to finish off an opponent—you don't want to be counter-attacked. While you are waiting to draw these cards, be sure to annoy opponents with the other Emperor specialties. Reorder your deck with **Future Foreseen**. Make opponents discard cards with **Let Go of Your Hatred** or their whole hand with **You Will Die**. **Meditation** not only heals you, it also stops an opponent from drawing, too. Once you have a few attack cards and some **Force Lightning**, play **You Will Die** to discard your opponent's hand, and then attack. Next turn, attack again and then play **Meditation** to heal and prevent the opponent from drawing. If things get dicey, play **Royal Command** to switch the Emperor with any Imperial Guard.



DARTH TYRANUS & SUPER BATTLE DROIDS

Darth Tyrannus has the ability to maintain a good hand while dealing out the beatings. **Taunting** does 7 points of damage and then allows you to draw, combining two actions into one. **Gain Power** gives you 3 cards with one action and **Force Drain** removes 2 cards from an opponent. Overall, it is easy to maintain a larger hand than your opponent. Don't forget about your Super Battle Droids; they're stronger than most other supporting characters. **Give Orders** lets all

of your characters rush into action, surrounding a weakened opponent. Leave your characters where they look "out of play," then charge in with one of these cards.



DARTH MAUL & BATTLE DROIDS

Darth Maul is all about short, free attacks and dizzying speed. Six of his cards (3 Sith Speed, 3 Super Sith Speed) don't count as one of your actions, giving Maul the potential to attack with 8 cards in one turn. Compared with most characters' 2-card maximum, these cards can strip defensive cards in a hurry and do some serious damage against even a well-stocked opponent. Attacking players while they have a small hand size will make them less able to stop your onslaught. Finish with an **Athletic Surge**: In addition to doing 8 points of damage, this card enables Maul to run back to safety. Early in the game, send out the Battle Droids while you draw for your good cards. If you have a lot of damage points remaining and your opponent is down to his last 3, wait for **Blinding Surge**: It deals 3 points to the attacker after Maul takes damage.



JANGO FETT & ZAM WESELL

Like Boba Fett, Jango Fett's strengths are darting in and out of battle. Armed with Zam Wesell on sniper duty, Jango can harass opponents all over the board. First, line up Zam Wesell in a spot where she can hit a lot of spaces, then move Jango in to draw out the enemy. When opponents close in, you'll have a lot of options. You can **Wrist Cable** them, limiting their actions. You can use **Missile Launch** to draw cards and do damage, or use Zam's **Sniper Shot** card to hit an unsuspecting target. Also be sure to fly Jango in to a group of opponents with one of his **Jet Pack** or **Rocket Retreat** cards, and then use **Flamethrower** to both damage and scatter them—since you choose where they go, you can move them into Zam's line of fire. If Zam starts getting counter-fire, use **Assassination** to flee to a new targeting position. **5**



Star Wars Stratego

It's Stratego with a few twists. You can play standard Stratego or Stratego using Rise of the Empire or Rebellion era pieces. The real fun is using the "special powers" in the game. Gamers who like thinking, bluffing, strategy, and classic board game play will enjoy all of these choices.

While all the strategies of classic Stratego still apply, the addition of the special power pieces mean you must add new tactics to your time-tested battle plans. Your strategy for special powers pieces should enhance the basic Stratego strategy, not replace it. How you set up your army, guard your Lightsaber (Command Center), move your pieces, and bluff go a long way in this game.

Use the **Vision** special power (the Emperor, Yoda, Luke Skywalker, and Darth Vader all have this power) to reveal the identity of a piece up to 2 spaces away. Lead with Luke or Vader and use **Vision** to reveal the identity of approaching forces, keeping Yoda and the Emperor safely hidden.

Han Solo and Boba Fett use the **Advanced Blaster** and **Charging** powers. **Advanced Blaster** can destroy a lower-ranked piece up to 2 spaces away. It can't destroy higher ranked pieces like Vader, but it will reveal their identity, so there is no downside to shooting at a figure. **Charging**—moving any number of spaces horizontally or vertically—gets these two in and out of the action quickly. Keep them out in the open where they'll have room to maneuver.

Jango Fett and Anakin Skywalker use the **Leaping** power to jump over any number of friendly pieces, enemy pieces, or obstacles. Start these heavy hitters in the back rows, from which they can rapidly and unexpectedly leap into action. Later in the game, they can be vitally effective in tightly populated areas.

Obi-Wan Kenobi, Mace Windu, Darth Tyrannus, and Darth Maul have the **Quickness** power, allowing them to move 2 spaces on one turn, even around corners. Try to keep one of these units on each side of the board.

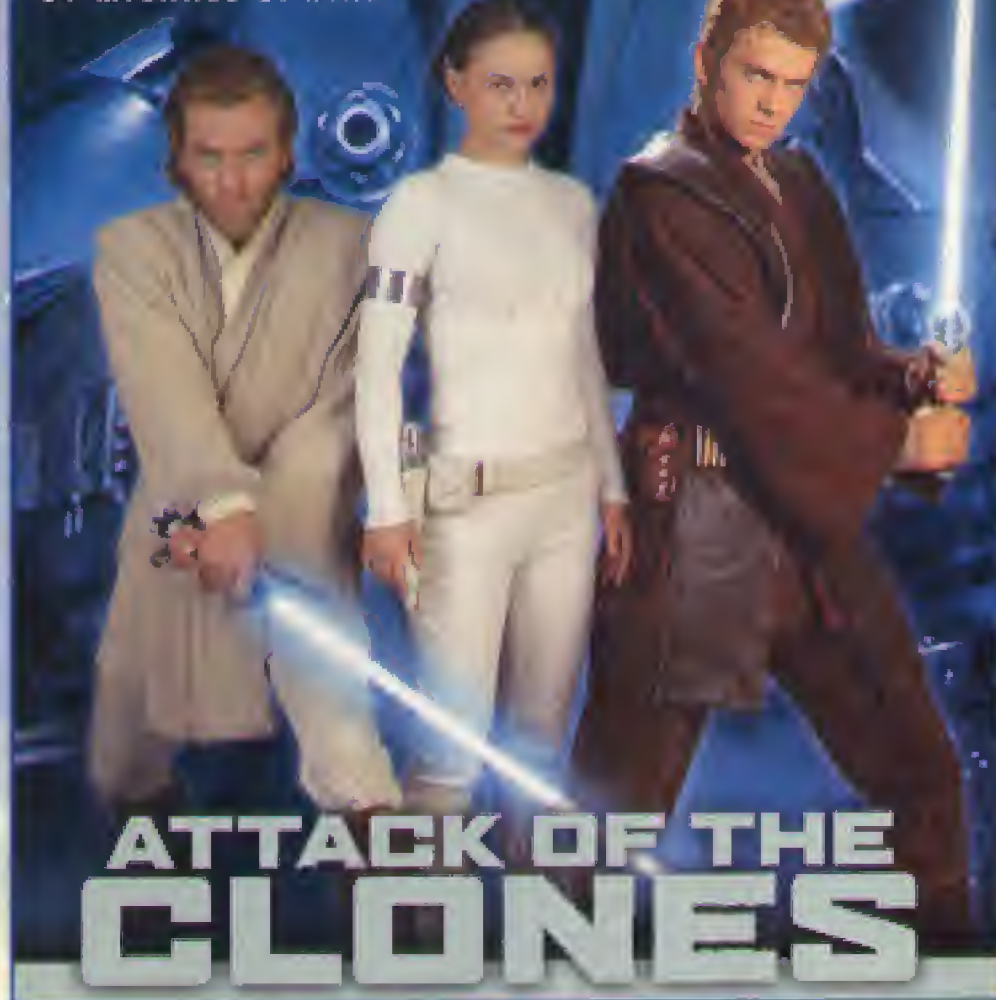
Finally, place your R2-units and Sith Probe Droids (Miners) hidden but near the front. They are slow but critical in defusing your enemy's Thermal Detonators.



You Are Not a Jedi Yet

Learning the New *Star Wars* Trading Card Game

BY MICHAEL G. RYAN



Whether you know the power of the dark side or consider yourself firmly allied with the light side, the new *Star Wars* trading card game from Wizards of the Coast is bound to recharge your lightsaber. Two players face off to do battle in three different arenas (Space, Ground, and Character), with victory going to the player who controls two of the three arenas. Learning the game is easy—its design allows for three different stages of play, from a playmat of the simplest rules, to the addition of more advanced rules that let you play with all the cards in the two-player starter game, to the final expert rules stage. Mastering the game, however, may require you to do a bit more than stretch out with your feelings

Stage 1: Your First Step into a Larger World

The *Attack of the Clones* starter set has an instructional playmat to get new players started. It has areas for each of the three arenas: Space, Ground, and Character. In this basic learning stage, each player puts specific cards in each of the arenas, and then it's time to do battle, beginning in the Space arena. The object: be the first to destroy all of your opponent's cards in two of the three arenas.

The battle sequence in the *Star Wars* TCG is not governed so much by who acts first and who acts second, but rather by which cards in each arena have the greater speed. The unit with the highest speed goes first,

then the next highest, and so on, regardless of which player they belong to. This makes the combat more pitched and exciting, as you might attack twice in succession in the Space arena, only to have your opponent attack twice in a row in the Ground arena.

Some Characters have abilities that you can use by spending Force. For example, "Pay 1 Force → Evade 2" means that you can spend 1 Force to prevent 2 hits.

You can use an ability only once each time the card attacks or is attacked. So, if a card reads "Pay 1 Force → This unit is +2 power for this attack," you can't spend 2 force to add 4 power.

Once you and your opponent have battled in all three arenas, the turn sequence begins again, both players untap all their cards, and add 4 to their Force meters.

Once you've played a few games this way, you'll probably be ready to pursue some damned-fool idealistic crusade, like learning the more advanced game: the *Star Wars* TCG has a number of rule that help fine-tune strategy and increase the excitement of battle by giving you some new card types and new ways to use the force.

Stage 2: Learning the Ways of the Force

The Force does, indeed, bind the galaxy together. Although Character cards have Force abilities like Evade, you can also use your Force to play Battle cards in the advanced game. In addition to Battle cards, you'll also learn to use Mission cards once you move beyond the basic game.

Instead of setting up the game by putting predetermined cards into each arena, players now each draw a hand of seven cards and choose which ones they wish to play. The Dark Side goes first, putting a card into any arena, and then the Light Side does the same—with a catch. Every unit has a build cost. When it's the Light Side player's turn, he or she must put down enough cards one by one into any arena until their total cost beats the Dark Side player's current total. For example, the Dark Side player starts by putting a card with a build cost of 7 into battle. The Light Side player has to beat 7. Then it's the Dark Side player's turn again, and he must beat the Light Side



player's current total. Players go back and forth like this, taking turns playing cards from their hands, until they each have 30 build points' worth of cards in battle. Each time a player plays a card, that player draws a card, keeping a total hand size of 7 cards throughout setup.

If you don't want to start with exactly 30 points' worth of cards, you can put your leftover points towards building one card.

Each turn, a die roll determines how many build points each player gets, plus a bonus point if you have at least one card in each of the 3 arenas. The Dark Side player spends all his or her build points first. If you pay the whole build cost at once (or finish building a card that's already face down in front of you), you can turn it face up and put it into the correct arena. If you don't pay the whole cost, leave it face down and use counters to show how many points you spent on it.

Stage 3: There Are Always Two—A Master and an Apprentice

But which one will you be? Once you've learned the two-player starter game, you'll be ready to explore the rest of the galaxy of rules that make up the expert game. The rulebook that comes with the game outlines everything else you need to know to grow from master to apprentice, including:

- Deck-construction rules (Each deck must: have at least 60 cards; have no more than 4 copies of any card with the same name and version; contain neutral cards and cards only for the appropriate side (Light or Dark); have at least 12 Space

units, 12 Ground units, and 12 Character units; and not more than twice as many units of one type than of another.)

- Detailed explanation of the three types of abilities (activated, triggered, and static), including keyword abilities like Bombard, Critical Hit, Deflect, Evade, Ion Cannon, and Shields; and the definition of the play-or-pass chance (the rule governing ability and Battle-card timing).
- The rules for stacking unique unit cards, and how to bid for control of unique units both players have in play.

As players might expect, Wizards of the Coast intends to support its new *Star Wars* trading card game with sanctioned tournaments. In fact, the fully supported Organized Play system will be one of the strongest features Wizards offers *Star Wars* TCG players, according to *Star Wars* TCG Brand Manager Carole Pucik. "Initially, tournaments will be constructed formal, eventually evolving to include limited play some time in 2003," she says. "We're set to hold the first *Star Wars* TCG tournaments at the *Star Wars* Celebration II event in Indianapolis the first weekend of May. We're also planning to run a league to bring new players into the game, support weekly sanctioned tournaments at the store level, and produce annual Championship events." The projected tournament system will provide worldwide ratings and rankings to bring greater meaning to the game.

So, now's the time to become more powerful than you can possibly imagine. Let the battle begin!

Stages 1 & 2: Summary of Battle

- The Space unit with the highest speed attacks first.
- Tap the attacking unit and target an opponent's unit in the Space arena.
- Roll a number of dice equal to the attacking unit's power.
- Put one damage counter on the target for each 4, 5, or 6 rolled. Discard the target if it has at least as many damage counters as its health.
- The Space unit with the next highest speed attacks first. Repeat the steps above until all the remaining cards in the Space arena are tapped. Then move on to the Ground arena.
- Ground battle: This works just like the Space battle.
- Character battle: This works just like the Space battle. When you finish with Character battle, start over again in Space.

Stage 3 & Beyond: Turn Sequence Summary

At this point, you'll know enough to begin playing complete games of the new *Star Wars* trading card game. There are, of course, many other rules and tidbits that make up the greater game, but what you've learned up to this point will form the backbone of every game.

1. READY PHASE

- a. **Untap:** Each player untaps all cards, turning them upright.
- b. **Gain Force:** Each player adds 4 Force to their current Force total.
- c. **Draw:** Each player draws a card.

2. COMMAND PHASE

- a. **"Command starts" step:** Some cards have abilities that trigger "when the command phase starts," so this is when those abilities are played.
- b. **"Roll for build points" step:** The Light Side player rolls for build points. Any player that occupies all three arenas gets +1 build point.
- c. **Dark Side build step:** The Dark Side player spends build points.
- d. **Light Side build step:** The Light Side player spends build points.
- e. **Dark Side retreat step:** The Dark Side player can retreat cards.
- f. **Light Side retreat step:** The Light Side player can retreat cards.

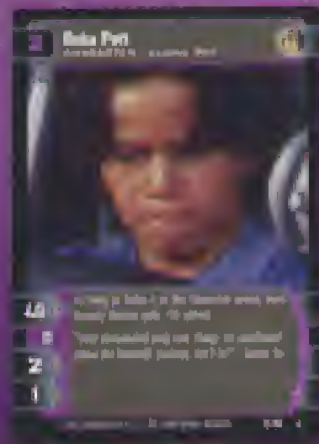
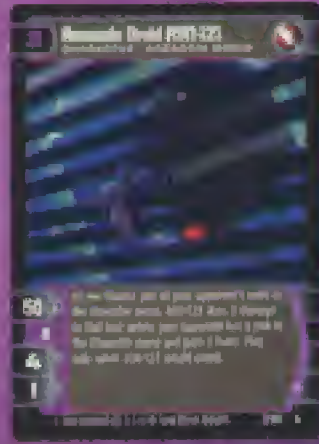
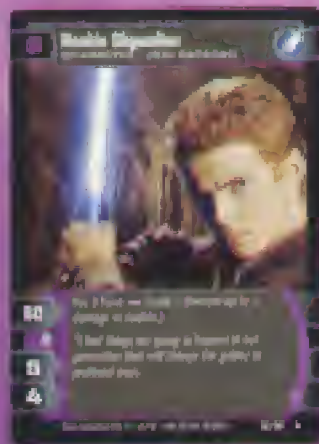
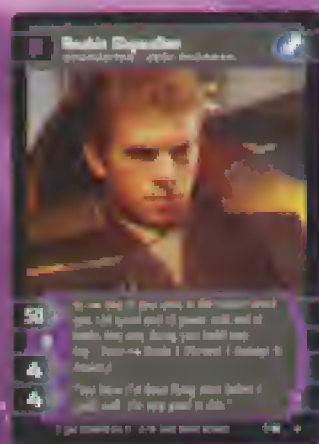
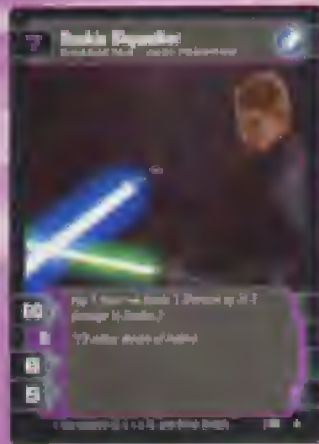
3. BATTLE PHASE

- a. **Space battle:**
 - i. Tap the attacking unit, turning it sideways. Choose an enemy unit in the Space arena.
 - ii. Roll a number of dice equal to the attacking unit's power.
 - iii. Do 1 damage for each 4, 5, or 6 rolled.
 - iv. Repeat steps i-iii with the next Space unit (next highest speed). Move on to the Ground arena when there are no more untapped Space units.
- b. **Ground battle:** This works just like the Space battle.
- c. **Character battle:** This works just like the Space battle. When there are no more untapped Character units, go back to step 1, Ready Phase.

ATTACK OF THE CLONES

Card Encyclopedia

Star Wars: Episode II Attack of the Clones doesn't hit theaters across the country until May 16th, but the first installment of the *Star Wars Trading Card Game* is available now! This card encyclopedia features all 180 cards from the *Attack of the Clones* set grouped by type, then listed in alphabetical order.



Attack of the FAQ

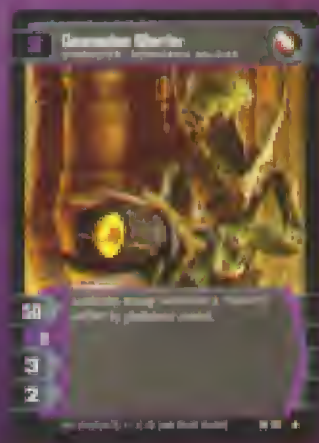
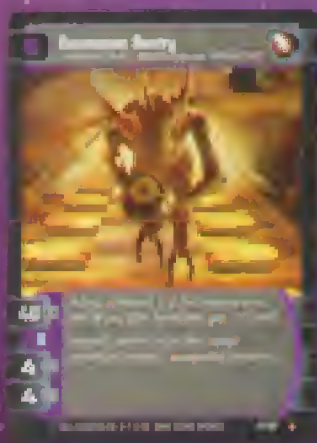
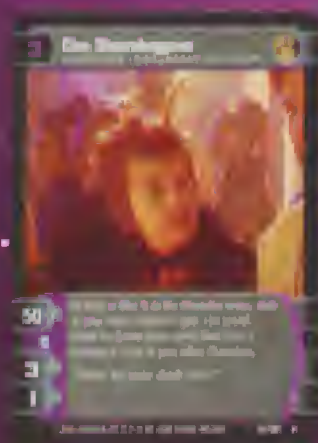
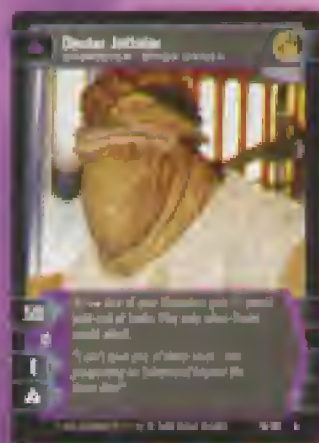
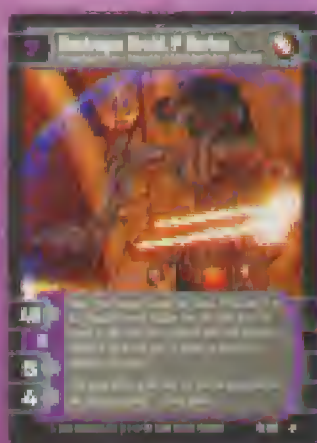
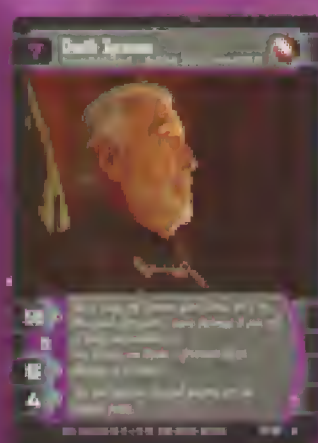
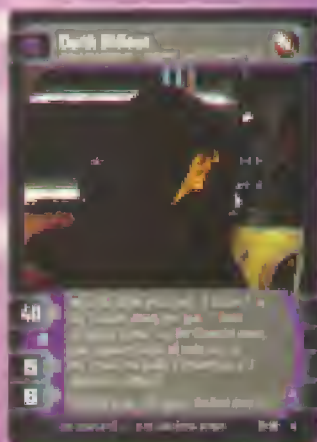
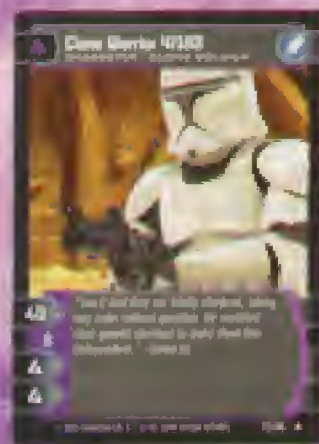
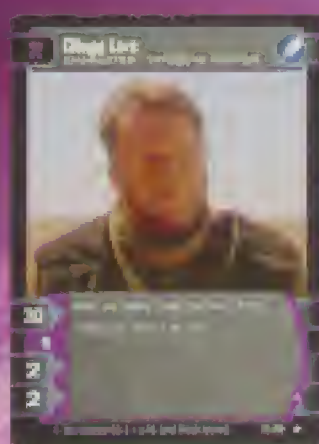
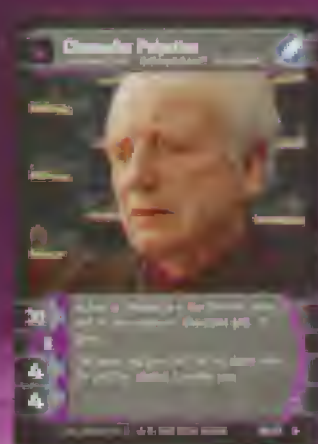
● 1997 年 12 月 1 日起, 凡在境内销售货物或提供应税劳务, 以及进口货物的单位和个人, 必须依法缴纳增值税。



What can I do when it's my opponent's turn? The rulebook doesn't say! In the *Star Wars* trading card game, there's no such thing as "your turn." Instead, there's one turn for both players. Unlike most other trading card games, you'll never have to wait long before you have something to do.

For example, if you're playing Light Side and your opponent is building units, you'll get to build units next. If you're playing Dark Side and your opponent is building units, you've just built your units for the turn.

What happens if my Republic Assault Ship uses its bombard ability to attack a Ground unit, then my opponent plays Attract Enemy Fire? Attract Enemy Fire doesn't change any choices made when your unit attacked, except for changing the unit that it is attacking. So, your opponent must choose one of her units in the Space arena. Your choice to use the bombard ability is still valid, so your Assault Ship will then attack the chosen unit, using its bombard number for its power.



Character

Stack Wars

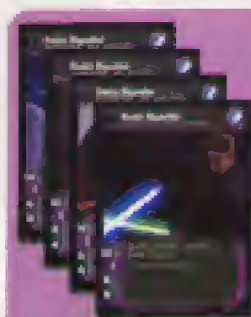
"I definitely wanted to see people open packs for the first time and see characters they recognized," designer Richard Garfield said of his latest trading card game. "I also wanted to have the rare, cool Anakin Skywalker card. It's an apparent contradiction—I want these cards to be common yet rare. The solution? Multiple copies of each character, and as you play them, they stack."

Stacking unique unit cards is one of the exciting aspects of the expert game. During gameplay, ignore all but the top card in the stack. That unit gets a +30 speed, and +1 power

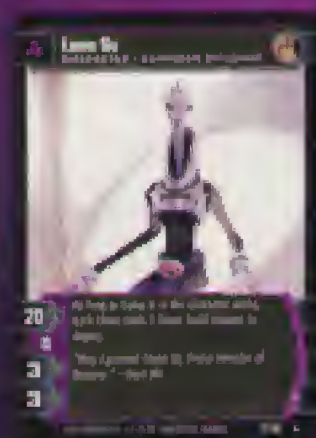
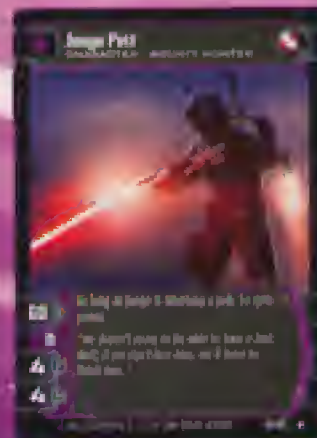
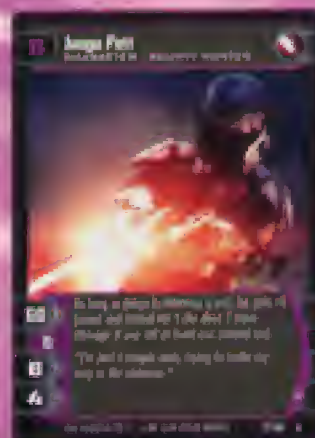
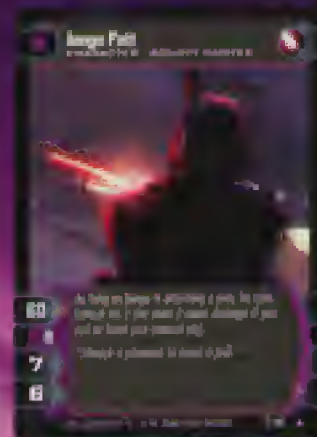
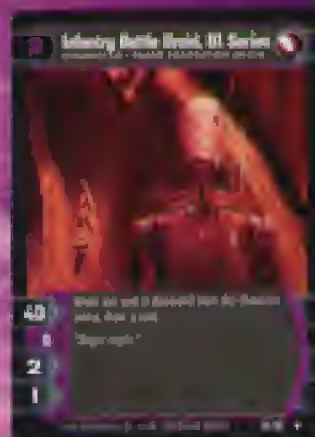
and health for each extra card stacked beneath it. There are some limits, however. You can only stack different versions of the same card (they have the same name, but different version letters). Also, you can never have more than three cards stacked beneath a unit.

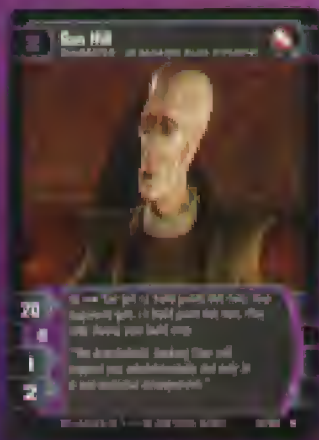
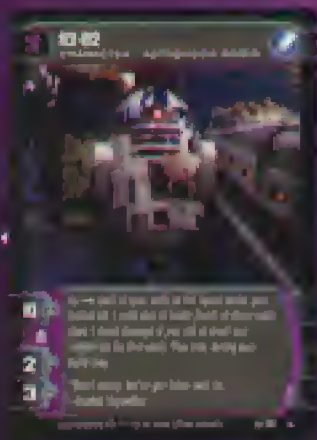
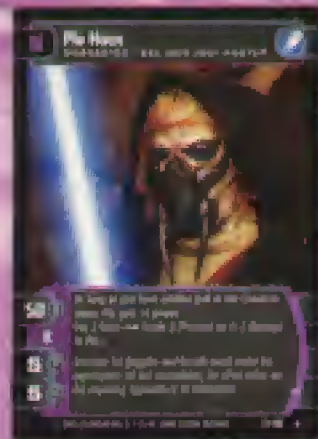
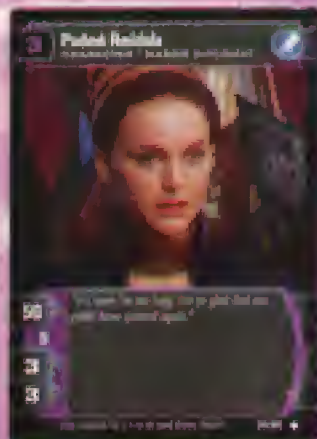
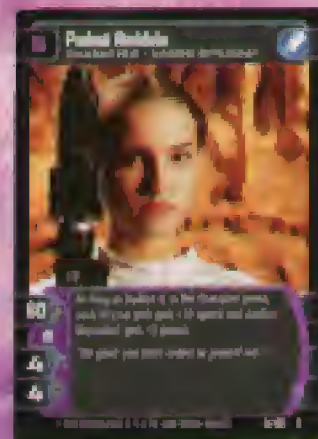
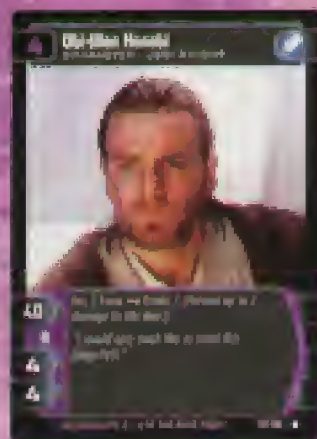
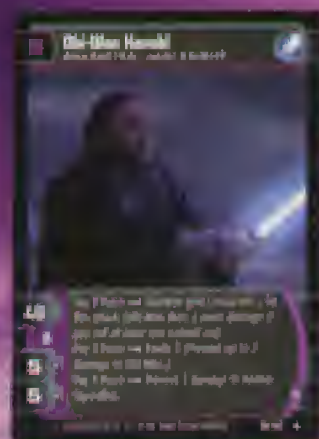
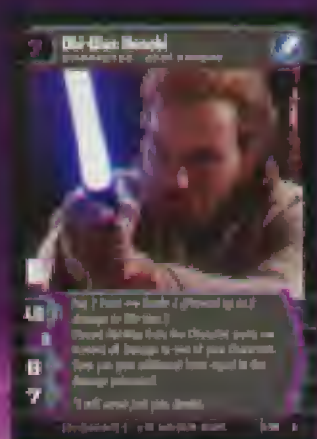
For the most part, when you stack you determine which card goes on top, giving you access to that version's abilities. Each build step

allows you to choose a new card from the stack to be the top card. The only drawback is, if the new card's build cost is higher you have to pay the difference.



This Anakin Skywalker has a total speed of 90, power of 9, health of 8, and a build cost of 10.





How do I save my units from damage?

You can use cards and abilities that say, “prevent,” “deflect,” or “evade” to save your units from damage. You can do this any time a unit is damaged, and you can play these abilities even if the unit with the ability is in your build zone.

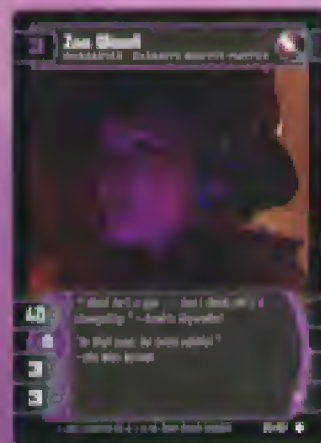
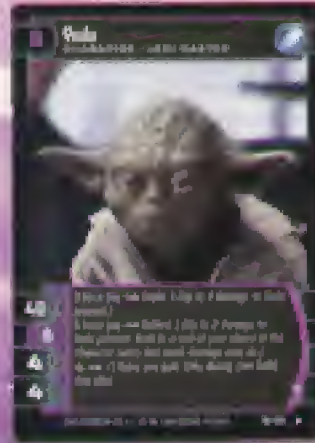
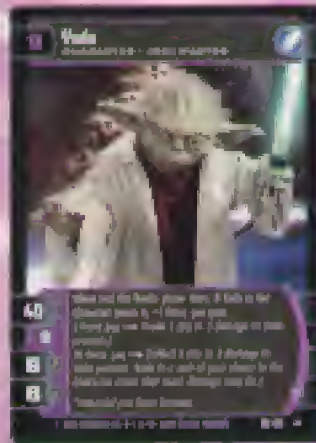
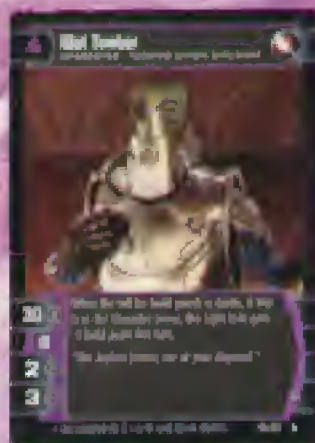
If you want to use a card or ability to prevent damage, wait until after any dice have been rolled. Then, you can play any of your cards and abilities that prevent, deflect, or evade damage.

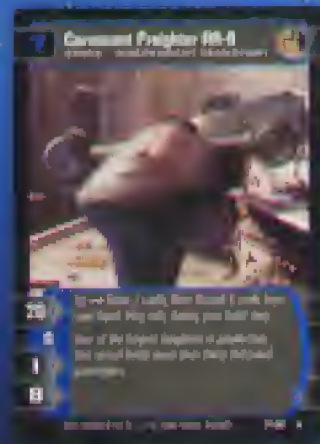
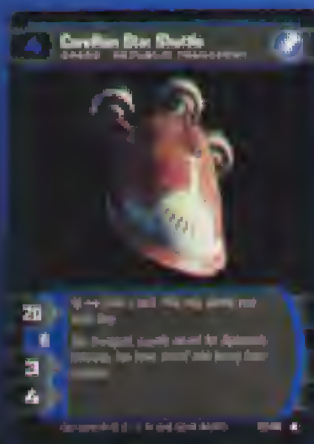
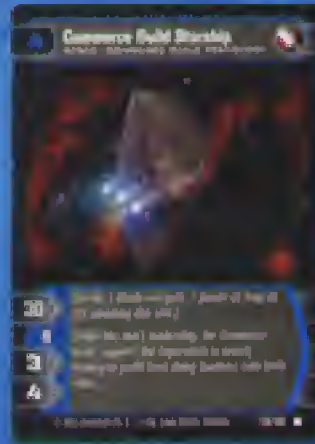
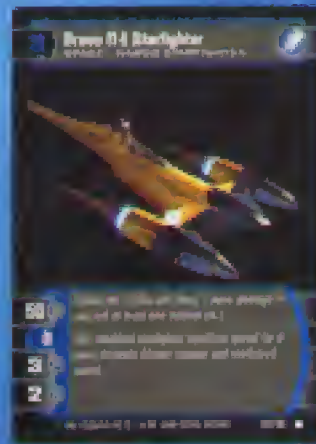
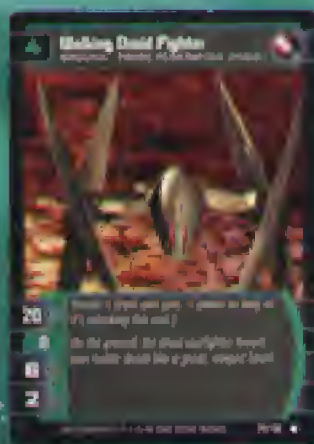
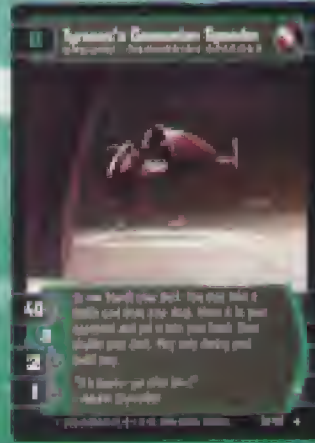
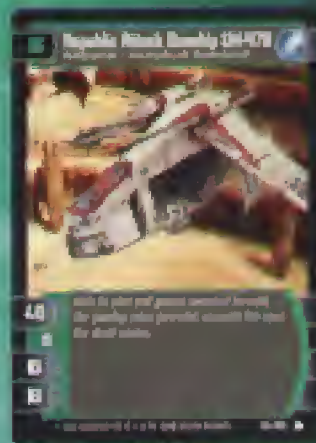
“Deflect” abilities are special. If you play a “deflect” ability, the unit you deflect damage from will do that much damage to another unit of your choice. Then, there’s a chance to play cards and abilities to prevent damage to that unit.

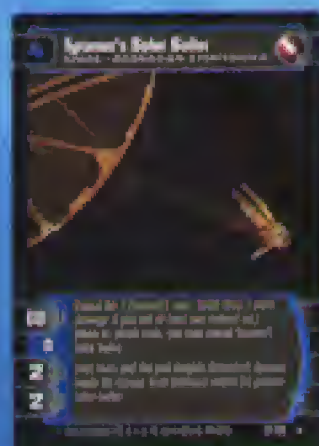
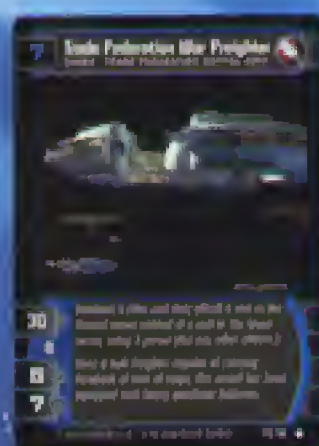
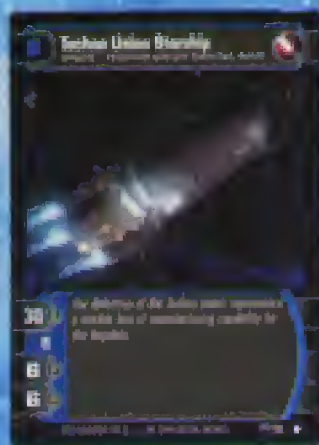
My friend and I both only have Dark Side decks. Can we play each other?

You can still play a game, but it would be better if one of you can build a Light Side deck. One of you must play as if you were the Light Side. That player builds second, but loses all ties, just like a normal Light Side player. The other plays the Dark Side as normal. If you can’t decide who will play which side, both players should roll a die. The player who rolls highest gets to choose.

Note that the *Star Wars* TCG is designed to be played with Light Side cards against Dark Side cards. You may find that some cards don’t work as you’d expect when they’re played on the wrong side.







Expanding the Universe: Mission and Battle Cards

Yellow-bordered Mission cards aren't units. They represent things that happen in the Star Wars universe. Once they're built, do what they say and discard them.

Red-bordered Battle cards represent actions and tactics during battles. Unlike Mission and unit cards, Battle cards don't have a build cost, though many do have a Force cost. You can play them only during battle, and only if you have enough Force. Like Mission cards, Battle cards are discarded when you've played them and done what they say.

How do I tell if a unit card is unique, and what does being unique mean?

Look at the bottom right of the unit card. If you see a letter in a circle, the unit card is unique. The rules for unique unit cards can be found in the rulebook in either the Two Player Trading Card Game box or the Light Side or Dark Side starter deck boxes. An electronic version of it can also be found on the Wizards of the Coast website, at www.wizards.com/starwars.

When is the last time I can play a Battle card that reads, "Play only before any Ground unit attacks."

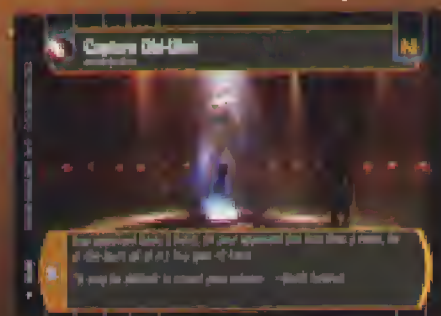
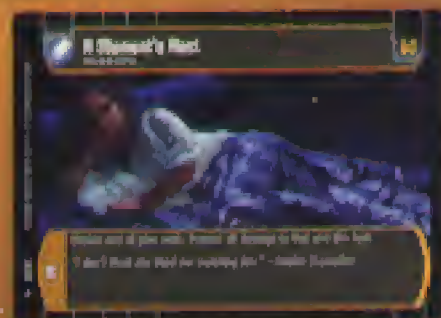
You can play it at any time before any of the ground units (on either side) starts an attack. Once a Ground unit has started an attack, it's too late to play it this turn. Playing an activated ability that reads, "play only when this unit would attack," is not considered attacking. If you choose not to attack with a unit, that also isn't considered attacking.

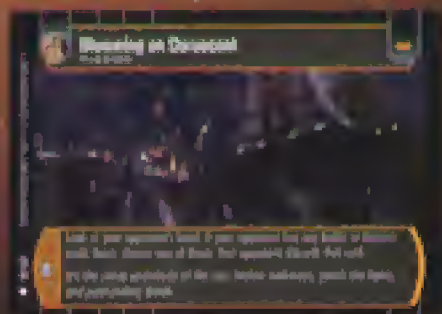
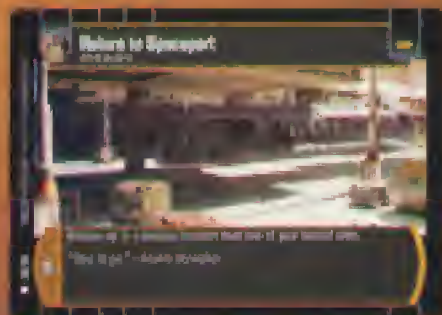
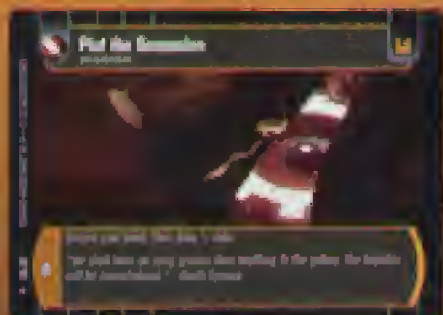
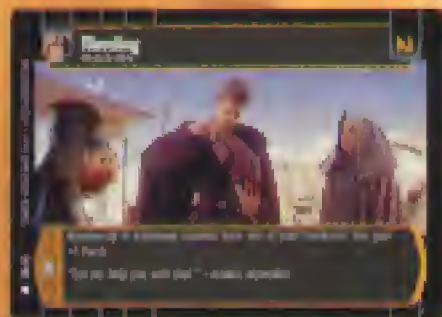
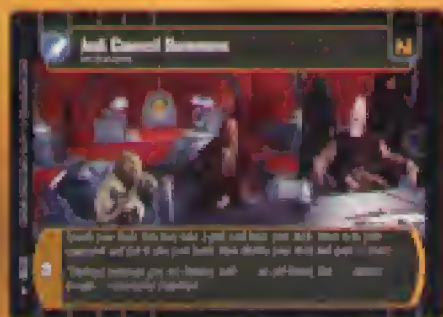
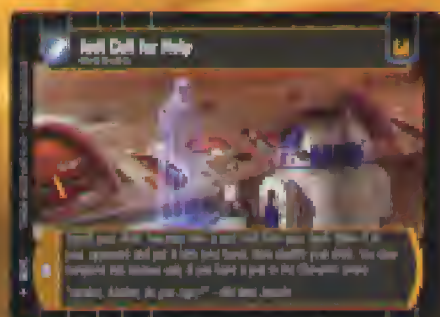
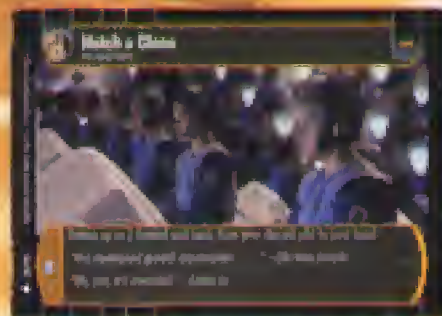
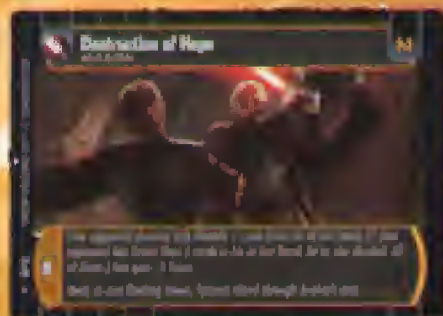
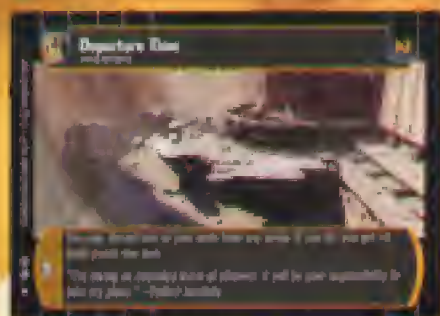
Why do effects that change speed last until end of battle, while effects that change power last for one attack only?

In the original game design, all effects lasted for one attack only. During development, we realized that this wouldn't work for speed, because you had to know the speed of a unit before you could tell what was attacking. When we make new abilities, we look at the time we want the ability to be played, and what it does. If it changes speed, or it affects some other unit, the duration will usually be until end of battle, but otherwise, it will probably be for this attack.

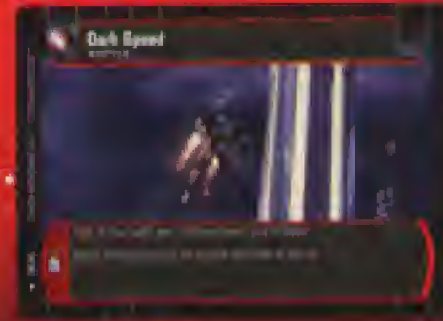
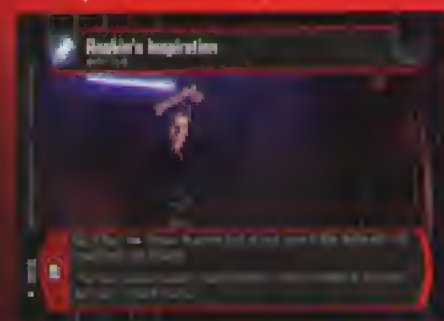
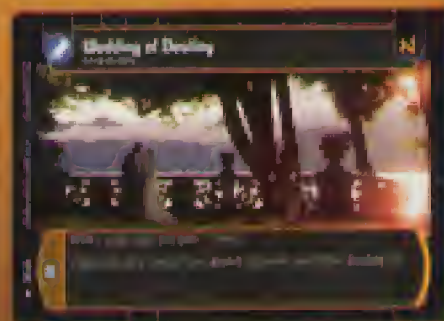
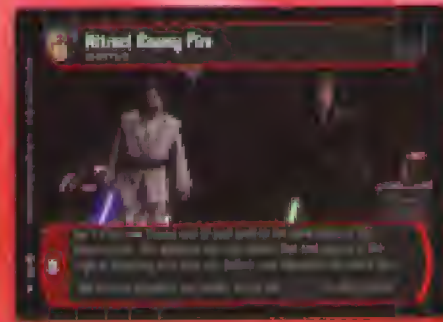
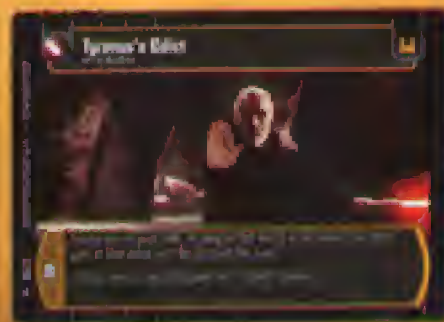
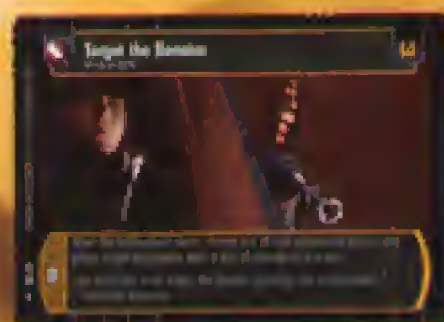
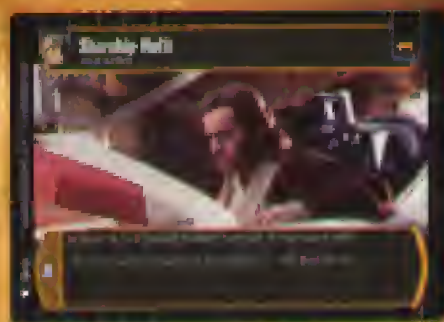
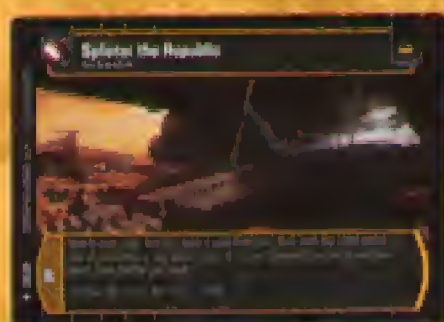
What does "does 4 dice of damage" mean?

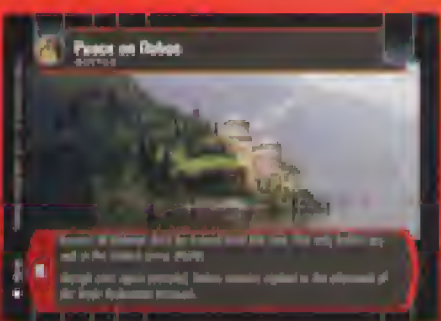
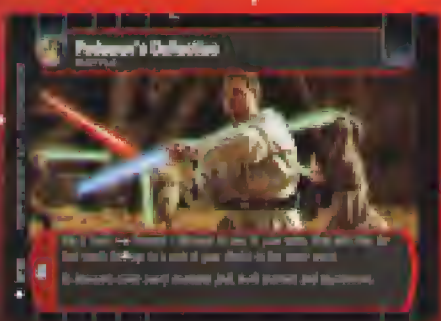
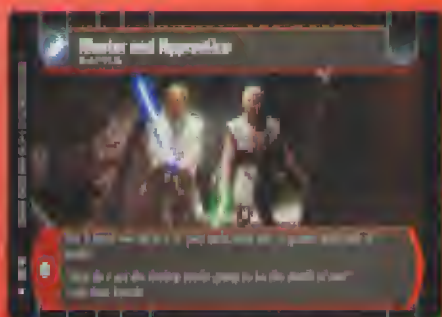
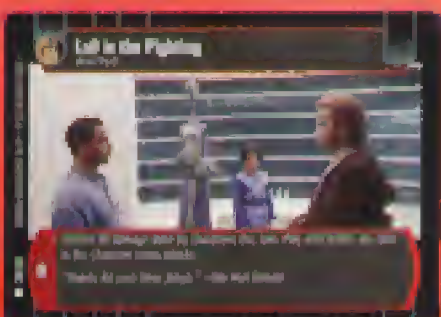
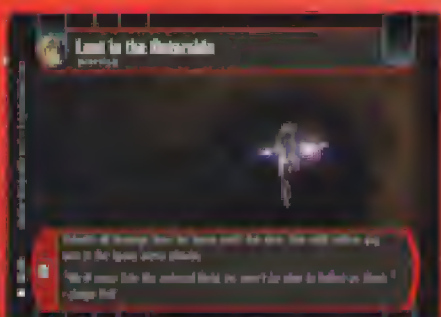
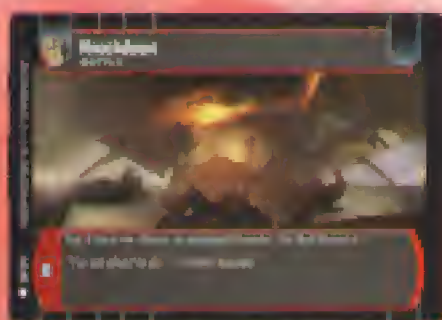
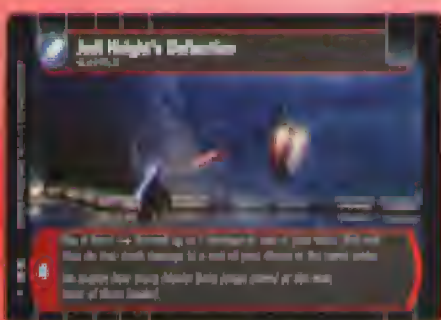
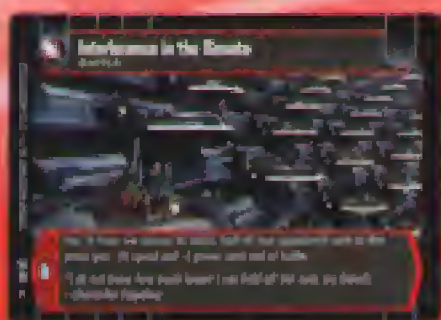
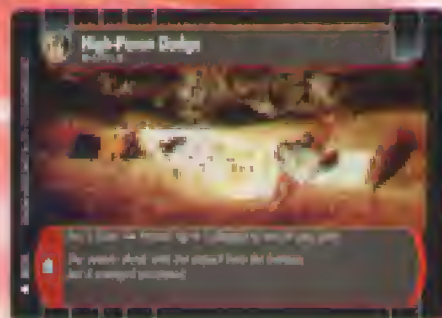
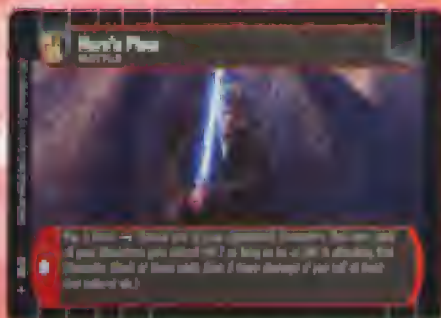
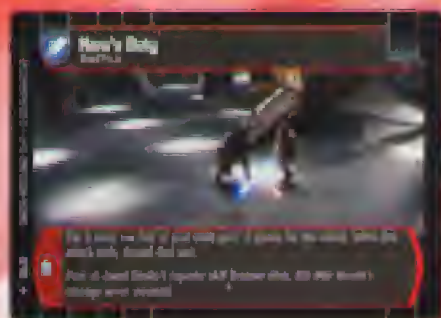
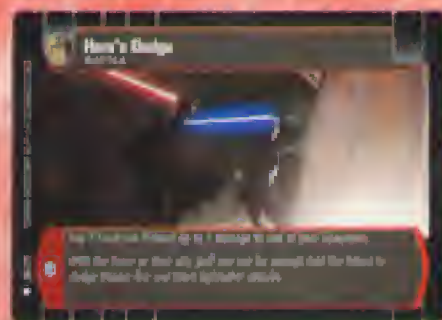
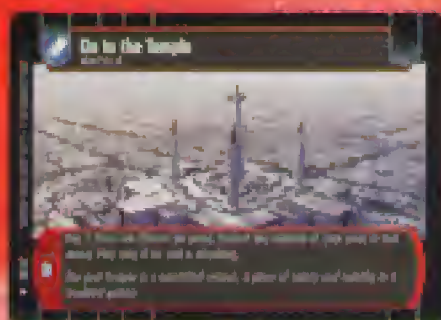
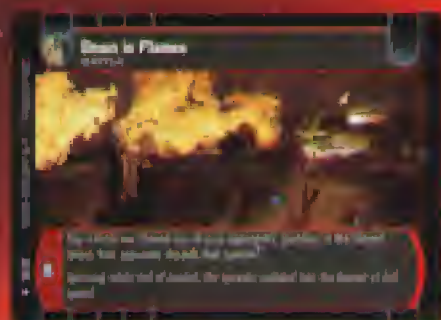
When a card or ability says that it "does 4 dice of damage," it means that you roll 4 dice, and do 1 damage for each roll of 4, 5, or 6. Cards and abilities that do a number of dice of damage aren't considered attacks.



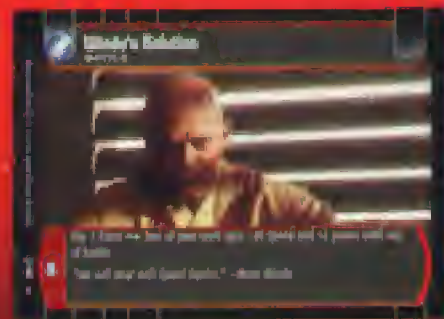
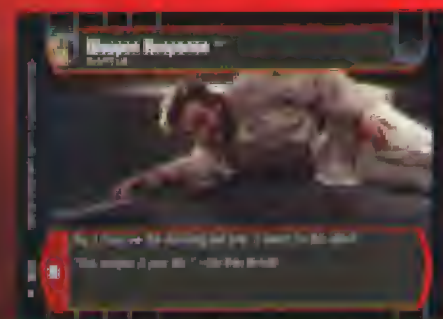
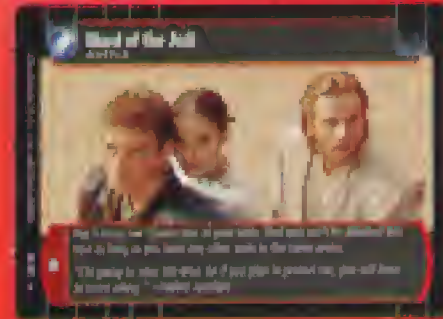
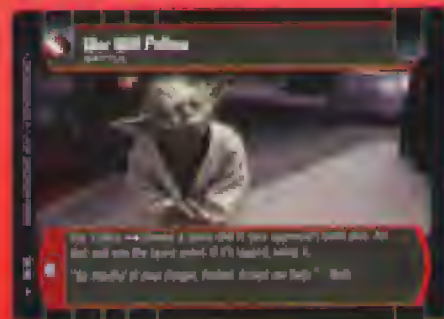
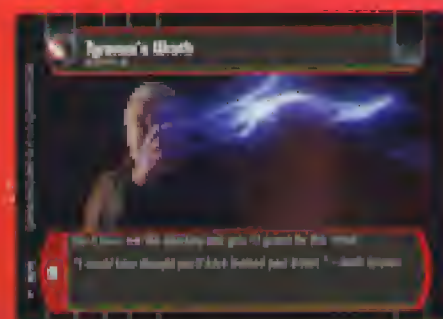
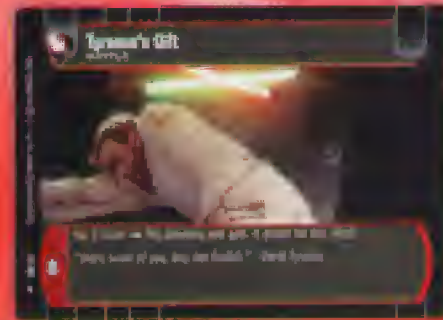
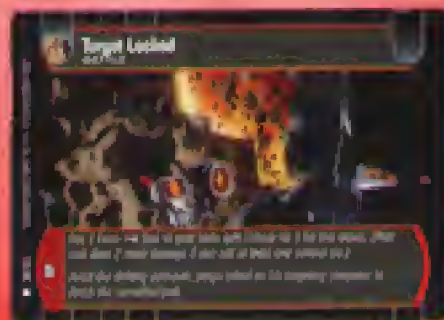
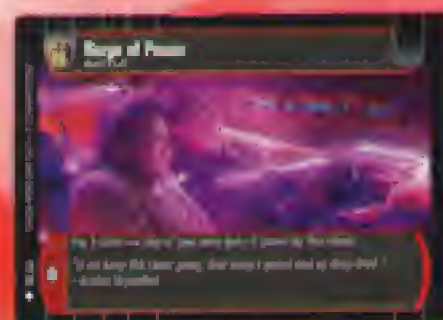
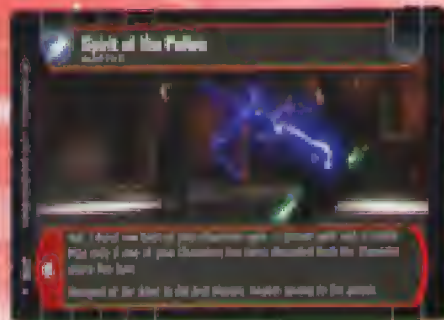
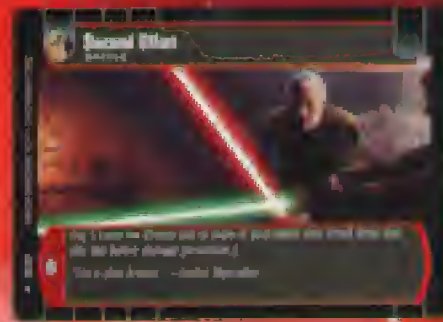
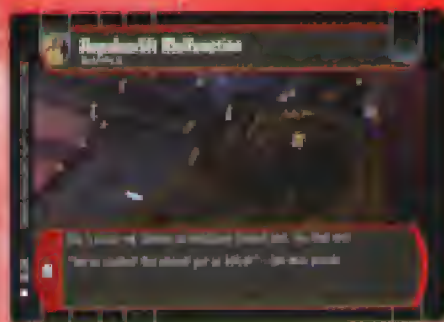
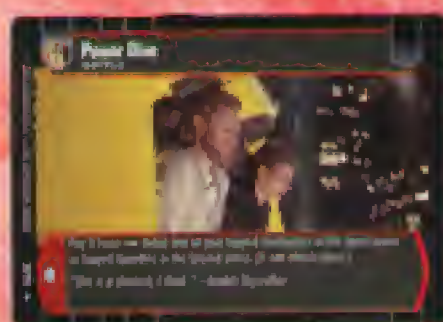


Mission





Battle



MODEL CITIZEN

The Lars Homestead

BY HQ WALLS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NANETTE GUNDT



Among the new and exciting settings that appear in *Attack of the Clones* is an old familiar one

—the Lars Homestead. It's where Luke Skywalker's epic adventures began 25 years ago, and the site plays a pivotal role in Episode II (and presumably in Episode III as well). Roam the halls, visit the garage, and peer into the many chambers of this family moisture farm.

Construction

The Lars Homestead is built to 25mm scale, making the completed size of the model less than 3' x 2'. Cutting away large sections of the desert landscape, artistically speaking, gives access to the homestead interior.

The first priority in designing the model is to determine the size of each room, as well as the courtyard and maintenance pit. See the sidebar for a list of all the dimensions.

The large louver panel located in the façade of the main courtyard is made from a 2 1/2" x 2 1/2" square piece of card stock, cutting three sides of each opening and scoring the lower fourth side. Gently push in each louver, and reinforce the panel from behind with strips of balsa.

Draw an 8" diameter circle on a piece of paper to define the perimeter of the courtyard, then glue the completed louver panel to the edge of the circle. Construct the section of earth, above the louver panel, from corrugated cardboard and with a finished height of 5" to denote the upper edge of the crater. The corrugated ribs of the cardboard run vertically to represent the tooling cut of excavation machinery.





Next, build all of the rooms and entrances surrounding the courtyard. Keep in mind that the desert floor elevation should finish at $4\frac{1}{2}$ " high. Located to the left of the louver panel are the storage and dining rooms, and refreshers; to the right are the courtyard entry, bedroom, stairwell, equipment room, and master bedroom. Make the room walls from $\frac{1}{4}$ "-thick balsa and corrugated cardboard. Taper the walls downward, progressing around the courtyard to represent the removal of the slight-blocking terrain. Make elevated floors from $\frac{1}{8}$ " wood. Attach strips of corrugated cardboard to round the interior corners of each room. Layer sections of corrugated cardboard to the courtyard entry walls, making the door openings wider toward the outside. Build the stairs from $\frac{1}{4}$ " strips of balsa to the level of the hallway and bedroom, and then add steps to the courtyard entries.

Build the maintenance pit doorway with louvers using the techniques of the courtyard louver panel sandwiched over $\frac{1}{8}$ " balsa framing. Make the refresher enclosure from $\frac{1}{8}$ "-diameter plastic tubing and half of a plastic egg. Create the kitchen cabinetry from plastic card and egg carton material. Glue the rooms to the paper courtyard circle and make the courtyard piping from wire of various thicknesses.

Draw a 6" diameter circle onto a piece of paper to define the perimeter of the maintenance pit. Construct the maintenance pit from corrugated cardboard, 5" tall at the highest elevation, establishing the maintenance pit doorway and the entry to the maintenance area directly across from one another. Build the garage using the same techniques as the courtyard rooms, and the work area from a cut down plastic food container. Use an old VHS cassette for the flooring of

Model Dimensions

Main Courtyard	8" diameter
Courtyard Entrance	$2\frac{1}{2}" \times 1"$
Maintenance Pit	6" diameter
Dining Room	$4" \times 3\frac{1}{2}"$
Kitchen Entry	$1\frac{1}{4}" \times 1\frac{1}{4}"$
Kitchen	$3" \times 2\frac{1}{4}"$
Storage Room	$4" \times 3"$
Refresher Entry	$2\frac{1}{2}" \times 2\frac{1}{2}"$
Refresher	$2\frac{1}{2}" \times 2\frac{1}{2}"$
Master Bedroom Entry	$2\frac{1}{2}" \times 2\frac{1}{4}"$
Master Bedroom	$4\frac{1}{4}" \times 3"$
Closet	$1\frac{1}{4}" \times 1\frac{1}{4}"$
Equipment Room	$2\frac{1}{2}" \times 2\frac{1}{2}"$
Storage Room	$4" \times 3"$
Bedroom	$4" \times 2\frac{1}{2}"$
Stairwell & Hallway	$1\frac{1}{4}"$ wide
Maintenance Room	4" diameter
Garage	$5\frac{1}{2}" \times 3\frac{1}{2}"$





the work area and garage. Disassemble the cassette and cut the casing to fit the garage floor. Use one half of the tape spool to create the maintenance room floor. To represent piping and equipment, glue varying diameters of plastic sprue and model "bits" to the walls.

Build the exterior casing of the model from $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood. The model must remain as two distinct subassemblies, and you should complete the casing later. Fill the "earth cavities" with Styrofoam pieces and $\frac{1}{8}$ " Masonite. Use Durham's Wood Putty to fill in all irregularities and smooth out the areas sculpted from corrugated cardboard. Set aside to dry for a minimum of 8 hours.

Remove the paper from the underside of the two subassemblies. Sprinkle baking soda onto the walls, apply a coat of paint over that, and allow time to dry. Apply base colors to the different parts of the model: medium gray for the white areas, red-brown for the earthen areas, and black for the work areas. Drybrush the gray areas with off-whites and white, the earth with lighter shades of brown, and the black with lighter shades of gray. Complete all detail painting and glue the two subassemblies together.

Finish the construction of the exterior casing and cavity areas. Leave an opening in the desert floor, where the entry dome will be located, and attach

four steps into the interior. Apply Durham's to any irregularities, and use it to build up the crater edges of the homestead. After the putty has dried for 8 hours, apply a coating of fine sand sprinkled over wet paint to the desert and sliced excavation areas of the model. After the textured portions have dried, apply a coating of medium-brown paint to the excavated areas and dun yellow to the desert section. Dry-brush all of the sand textured areas with light tan, pale yellow, and white.

Make the entry dome with a $2\frac{3}{8}$ " plastic egg half, 3" cardboard tubing, $\frac{1}{8}$ " plastic tubing, and $\frac{1}{8}$ "- $\frac{3}{8}$ " balsa. Cut the cardboard tubing $\frac{1}{8}$ " long and glue the egg to one end. Cut the door opening $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide, with a rounded top made to match the inside diameter of the $\frac{1}{8}$ " tubing. Cut a section of tubing $\frac{1}{8}$ " long and then cut it in half along the length of the tube to create the roof for the dome doorway. Build up the rest of the doorway and the dome "ears" with $\frac{1}{8}$ " balsa, and fill the gaps with $\frac{1}{8}$ " balsa. Fill any remaining irregularities with putty, and allow 8 hours for drying. Coat the entire dome with baking soda, apply a beige base coat, and drybrush with pale yellow, off-white, and white. Glue the completed dome to the stair entry location of the desert area.



Detailing

Parts for detailing the homestead come from many sources, including the Action Fleet Podracer Hanger and Mos Espa Market playsets. Use equipment and machinery from the Hanger, and planters, desktops, countertops, and vaporator parts from the Market set. Scratch-build the vaporators from old markers, round and square plastic tubing, wire, beads, metal washers, hatpins, and other bits. Build additional vaporator equipment from marker caps, metal washers, and round thumbtacks. Use resin-cast beds, crates, machinery, and barrels, and make fusion generator supply tanks from spare bogie wheels. Construct machinery for the equipment room from old AT-AT parts and wire, and the kitchen table from plastic sheeting. Spray paint all of the parts gray and dry-brush with off-white and white. Paint the bed linens in pleasant colors.

The T-16 Skyhopper can be made from a small model of an Imperial Shuttle, with the addition of a triangular cockpit section made from plastic card. Build the maintenance pit walkway from 1/8" balsa wood and plastic screening. Use resin cast computer consoles, crates, equipment, and cabinets for the garage, maintenance pit, and work area. Make chairs from Plastruct 1/4" scale model office furniture. Spray paint all of the items black and dry-brush them with dark blue and gray.

Attach small bits of furnace filter material to the Mos Espa Market food baskets, and apply green leafy flocking to represent planters. Use the same technique to create the plant located above the courtyard entrance. Cut paper Oriental rugs from advertisements, and glue them to light cardboard for use as bedroom carpets. Apply earth-tone chalk to various parts of the model to suggest age and wear. Glue all of the finished detail parts to the model in the desired locations. Apply earth-tone flocking to the desired areas of the model along with a small amount of green foliage. Paint the outer casing black and, when dry, spray with DullCote.

The Lars homestead is just one of the many *Star Wars* models you can build with some cardboard, a few spare parts, and a lot of ingenuity. It makes a great showpiece, or it can be used with 25mm miniatures to create your own *Star Wars* adventures.



DROID STARSHIPS

The Corellian Engineering/Loronar Series

BY OWEN K.C. STEPHENS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEFF CARLISLE

The idea of a droid starship has long seemed a good one. In theory, mating a droid brain with the power and utility of a starship should create an extremely useful tool. Droid starships need little in the way of supplies and are unlikely to mutiny or grow lax in their duties. Especially for thankless jobs such as exploration, patrol, and "milk run" cargo routes, droid starships look attractive on paper, and the desire of military planners for a competent droid warship is legendary.

Unfortunately droid starship designs rarely meet these expectations. Even the most complex droid rarely begins performing its job perfectly, needing a few months or years to settle in to a particular set of tasks as its owners fine-tune its factory settings. This shakedown period can result in expensive disasters. Droid starships are also subject to reprogramming, and most are vulnerable to ion weapons (once shut down by an ion weapon, the starship cannot restart itself and requires external assistance). Despite these drawbacks, numerous shipyards and droid manufacturers have set up joint divisions to design and build droid starships in the hopes of overcoming the inherent problems.

One such division was CEC-L Shipyard Lab 6671-x42 (also called The Nerfworks, since the lack of funding or executive visits to the site resulted in a sense among employees that they "smelled bad" to corporate higher-ups). The Nerfworks was a unit funded jointly by the Corellian Engineering Corporation (CEC) and Loronar. CEC, a powerful starship construction firm, had long seen a droid starship as a wonderful way to sell expensive, high-end units to planets and corporations with money to spend but few pilots

to spare. Loronar was a much smaller company that specialized in miniaturized, self-motivating spy droids. To Loronar, the project represented an opportunity to enter the huge galactic market.

The Nerfworks designed a little more than a dozen droid starships, a few of which were actually produced. The ships were a modest success, but they suffered from all the prob-

YQ-400 MONITOR DROID

CEC/Loronar YQ-400 Monitor Droid Patrol Ship

Class: Space transport	Initiative: +3 (+1 size, +2 crew)
Size: Small (36m long)	Crew: 0 (Normal +2)
Hyperdrive: None	Maneuver: +3 (+1 size, +2 crew)
Passengers: 0	Defense: 21 (+1 size, +10 armor)
Cargo Capacity: None	Shield Points: 60 (DR 10)
Consumables: 20 years	Hull Points: 120 (DR 10)

Cost: 175,000 credits (new), 100,000 credits (used)

Maximum Speed in Space: Attack (8 squares/action)

Atmospheric Speed: 960 km/h (16 squares/action)

Weapon: Heavy ion cannons (2 sets of 2 fire-linked); **Fire arc:** Partial turret (front, left, right); **Attack Bonus:** +5 (+1 size, +2 crew, +2 fire control); **Damage:** 8d10x2; **Range modifiers:** PB +0, S +0, M -2, L -4.

Weapon: Laser cannons (2 fire-linked); **Fire arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +5 (+1 size, +2 crew, +2 fire control); **Damage:** 5d10x2; **Range modifiers:** PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a.





lems that plague most droid starship designs. In the end, the Nerfworks was decommissioned (though rumors claim they continue to work in secret, building experimental stealth ships), and CEC and Loronar went their separate ways.

Three examples of the Nerfworks designs are presented below.

YQ-400 Monitor

The YQ series of droid starships was designed for light patrol work in well-traveled, peaceful systems. It's not heavily enough armed to stop serious smugglers or pirates, nor smart enough to serve in any serious military capacity, but it serves well as a simple watch ship. It's most commonly found in systems with heavy commerce and shipping, where crewing enough ships to cover every possible approach vector is prohibitively expensive, and a great deal of income is derived from docking fees and tariffs. The most popular of these ships is the YQ-400 Monitor.

The YQ-400's standard programming stations it in a predefined vector in the outer reaches of a system. Its use of only passive sensors makes it very difficult for other ships to locate (see Sensors in Chapter 11: Starships of the core rulebook). When it detects a starship, the YQ-400 reports the contact to spaceport control and hails the ship.

Until the Monitor receives an all-clear signal from spaceport control, it follows the ship and periodically reports its location until instructed otherwise. Monitors are programmed never to fire on a ship unless attacked first—their job is to detect, locate, and follow ships, not destroy them (unless ordered to). While this gives hostile ships an advantage, it also keeps the Monitors from accidentally attacking friendly ships.

Yqaqt Droid Transport

The Yqaqt droid transport (named for a rather stubborn riding beast native to the Mid Rim world of Yelmor) was a simple idea—make a droid cargo ship able to carry large amounts of material on short runs through safe hyperspace lanes. In general the design is a success, though the Yqaqt droid brains have developed a reputation for "peissiness" similar to that of most protocol droids. The ships have no room for interior crew, though conversion could be made to carry live cargo if so desired.

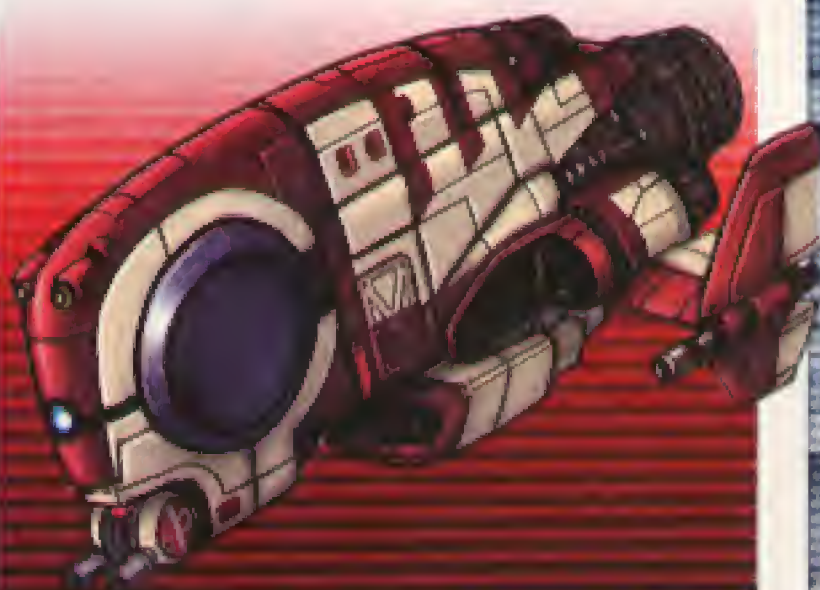
Nerfworks engineers had hoped that the Yqaqt would revolutionize space hauling. Although able pilots, the Yqaqt droid brain lacks the ability to negotiate with the fervor of a sentient captain. It also has an unfortunate

tendency to become lost during hyperspace jumps, sometimes arriving at a destination weeks or months late. Though some large corporations have found Yqaqts economical to use (especially if their hyperspace routes are preprogrammed), most hauling of this sort remains in the hands of independent captains who own, fly, and maintain their own ships.

Yqaqt are armed only with ion weapons and tend to get trigger-happy when they encounter ships that refuse to maintain a respectful distance. Most are equipped with one or more ASP labor droids in the cargo area.

The Crusader

Officially the Crusader is the XX-777, a prototype military droid starship designed to serve as an automated escort frigate. Records claim it was destroyed after its initial test runs. In reality the Crusader escaped during a battery of hyperdrive tests and has been on its own ever since. Both CEC and Loronar deny any such claims.



YQAQT DROID TRANSPORT

CEC/Loronar Yqaqt droid cargo ship

Class: Space transport

Size: Small (21 m long)

Hyperdrive: x2 (x12 backup)

Passengers: 0

Cargo Capacity: 250 metric tons

Consumables: 2 years

Initiative: +3 (+1 size, +2 crew)

Crew: 0 (Normal +2)

Maneuver: +3 (+1 size, +2 crew)

Defense: 21 (+1 size, +10 armor)

Shield Points: 60 (DR 10)

Hull Points: 120 (DR 10)

Cost: 130,000 credits (new); 32,000 (used)

Maximum Speed in Space: Attack (6 squares/action)

Atmospheric Speed: 720 km/h (12 squares/action)

Weapons: Ion cannon; Fire arc Turret; **Attack Bonus:** +7 (+1 size, +2 crew, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 5d10x2; **Range modifiers:** PB +0, S +0, M/L n/a.

The Crusader was an attempt to overcome one of the basic failings of droid starships—the long refinement time it takes a new droid brain to “learn” its job. Rather than build a new droid brain to place within the XX-777 military test hull, technicians at the Nerfworks found a centuries-old military protocol droid and reconditioned it to run the ship. The idea was that the droid brain would already have experience with most military terminology and needs, and would adapt to running a military vessel quickly and easily. In fact, the main problem was that the droid brain performed too well.

Instead of using periodic memory wipes to keep the droid brain in check, the Nerfworks crew instead hard-wired a series of protocols into the droid’s heuristic processor. They were: protect the innocent; obey any order that does not violate the previous protocol; and preserve its own safety as long as that does not violate the first two protocols. The Crusader performed perfectly throughout the early tests. Eventually, the engineers decided to take the XX-777 apart to try to replicate the droid’s programming for mass production. Somehow, the Crusader overrode its programming and fled into hyperspace.

It might be that it decided it couldn’t protect the innocent, its primary order, if it allowed itself to be taken apart, it’s even possible the Crusader was reprogrammed either by one of the Nerfworks technicians or by an industrial spy. Since the ship was officially destroyed and the records sealed, the galaxy might never know just what happened.

It’s rumored that the Crusader sticks to rarely used hyperspace routes, mostly in the Fringe regions. There are numerous reports of a ship matching its description stopping pirate attacks and rescuing stranded crews. Presumably the Crusader has allies to assist it with repairs and the occasional refueling, though who these are and why they help is unknown—clearly the Crusader lacks any traditional way to earn or store credits.

As a test ship, the Crusader was equipped with internal space for passengers and cargo. These were originally used for Nerfworks technicians and their equipment, and include auxiliary weapon controls and an engineering station, but not pilot controls. With a full load of consumables, the Crusader could serve as a transport for long journeys. According to reports from those claiming to have been rescued by the Crusader, it is well stocked, but it lacks a medical bay. **S**



THE CRUSADER

Crusader XX-777 prototype droid frigate

Class: Capital	Initiative: +7 (–1 size, +8 crew)
Size: Large (120 meters)	Crew: 0 (Expert +8)
Hyperdrive: x1.5 (x10 backup)	Maneuver: +7 (–1 size, +8 crew)
Passengers: 30	Defense: 19 (–1 size, +10 armor)
Cargo Capacity: 300 metric tons	Shield Points: 130 (DR 10)
Consumables: 2 years	Hull Points: 460 (DR 10)

Cost: Not for sale (likely valued at 1.8 million credits)

Maximum Speed in Space: Cruising (4 squares/action)

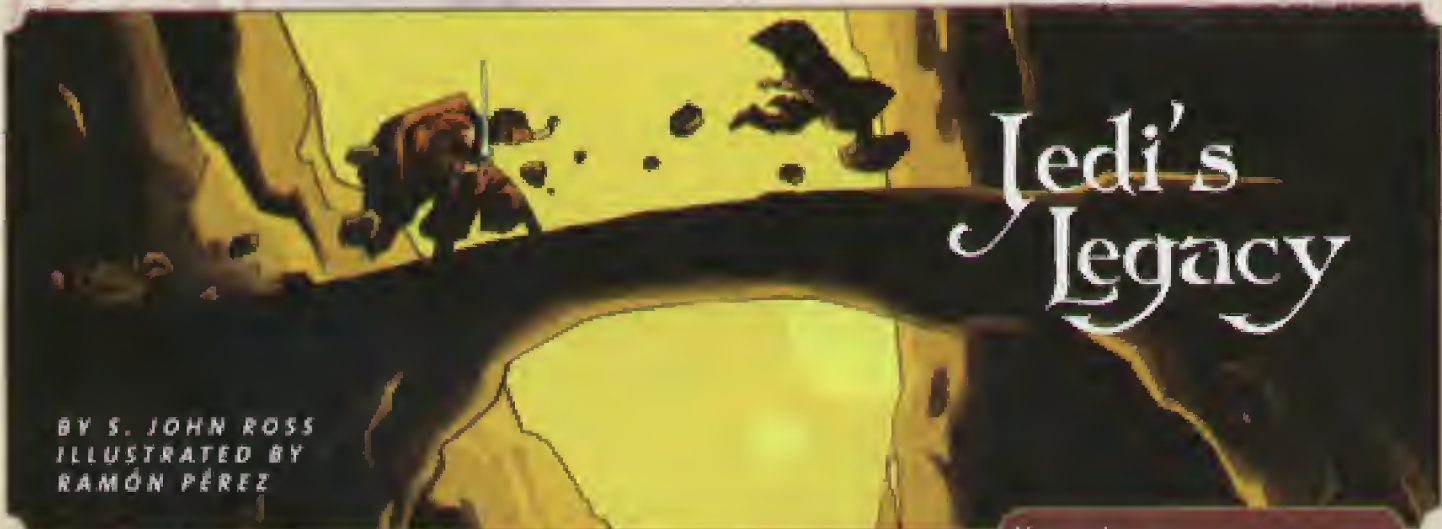
Atmospheric Speed: 480 km/h (8 squares/action)

Weapon: Turbolasers (2); Fire arc: Partial turret (1 front, left, rear; 1 front, right, rear);

Attack Bonus: +13 (–1 size, +8 crew, +6 fire control); **Damage:** 7d10x5; **Range modifiers:** PB –2, S/M +0, L –2.

Weapon: Heavy ion cannons (2); Fire arc: Front; **Attack Bonus:** +11 (–1 size, +8 crew, +4 fire control); **Damage:** 8d10x2; **Range modifiers:** PB –2, S/M +0, L –2.

Weapon: Assault concussion missile tubes (2, 30 missiles each); Fire arc: 1 front, 1 rear; **Attack Bonus:** +9 (–1 size, +8 crew, +2 fire control); **Damage:** 9d10x5; **Range modifiers:** PB +0, S/M/L n/a.



Jedi's Legacy

BY S. JOHN ROSS
ILLUSTRATED BY
RAMÓN PÉREZ

Jedi's Legacy™ is a Star Wars adventure that you play by yourself. As you play, you'll encounter instructions that tell you what section to read next. **Don't read ahead;** the numbered sections won't make sense in the order presented, and the secrets of the adventure could be revealed too soon. Once you've familiarized yourself with your character and the rule sidebars, you're ready to begin your adventure!

You Are Nason Lario

The early stages of your Jedi training ended three years ago at the Jedi Temple on Coruscant, and since then you have traveled the galaxy in the company of Niquon, the Jedi Master who took you as his Padawan learner. For much of that time, you have lived in the treacherous mountains of Skalokor, the second moon of Yabosta. Niquon has a sanctuary here carved into the side of a remote mountain. The native species are the Dolandu, white-furred humanoid who respect the Jedi. The few locals aware of Niquon's sanctuary help him trade for supplies discreetly.

Your Adventure Begins . . .

You stand on a natural stone bridge spanning a narrow gorge, high in the mountains of Skalokor. You're grateful that you can't see the shadowed forest hundreds of meters below as you dodge your Master's lightsaber attacks. You flip backward, land on your hands, and bend to avoid the deadly white energy of Niquon's blade.

You regain your feet and prepare for a renewed assault, but Niquon deactivates his lightsaber and hands it to you. "Rest, Nason," he says. "Then begin your saber drills."

He smiles. "You are ready. In a few more days, you'll begin constructing your own lightsaber. Soon, we'll leave Skalokor, and I'll take missions from the Council again. You are a fine young Jedi."

You bow, concealing your pride and excitement. You and Niquon stay out on the bridge, practicing wide strokes and tight parries against a rising wind. Your Master's regimen emphasizes defense. You must avoid flying rocks and cascades of cold water, sometimes while perched in a tree or hanging from a ledge. As darkness falls, the white blade takes on a new brilliance.

Niquon sits on a nearby rock, watching your progress, then suddenly stands and motions for you to stop. You sense nothing out of the ordinary and hear only the rush of wind through the treetops, but Niquon says, "We have a visitor."

You deactivate the lightsaber, and the blade vanishes. You both move toward the only path down the mountain.

An aged, exhausted Dolandu climbs the trail with a heavy bundle in his arms. "Be careful," he whispers, as you approach. "It's not safe."

Inside the sanctuary, the three of you sit around a stone table. Borta, the Dolandu, is a local trapper, and he and Niquon speak rapidly in the local patois. You can make out only a few words, but the bundle on the table catches your eye: It contains a droid, jet-black and trimmed with rings of chrome. It isn't moving, and its lights blink faintly.

"It's an assassin droid," Niquon explains to you in Basic. "A modified medical model; it flies and injects poisons. Borta found it floundering on a rock; its navigation systems are damaged." Niquon prods at it with a hydroslicer, evoking a brief shower of sparks. "There are explosive devices here," he points, "and here. And while the walls of my sanctuary are shielded, the droid might have been transmitting while Borta carried it up the hill."

Borta's eyes widen. In heavily accented Basic he cries, "I am sorry, exalted protector! I did not intend to visit danger on you!"

"You were right to bring it, Borta," says Niquon. "I don't know who is sending these, but there are almost certain to be more." He pauses before speaking to Borta again. "My apprentice will take the droid to Port Kalla on Yabosta. I will go with you back down the mountain."

Nason Lario

Level 1 Jedi Guardian

Defense: 14 Vitality: 12

Initiative: +1

Melee Attack: +2

Ranged Attack: +2

Equipment: Comlink, 400 credits

Skills:

Battlemind +6 Computer Use +6

Empathy +5 Enhance Ability +6

Force Defense +6 Force Stealth +6

Friendship +2 Heal Self +4

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Control, Dodge, Force-Sensitive, Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

Languages: Basic, Rodese, Dosh.



You've never been given a mission of your own before. "Why me, Master Niquon? I've never flown the cloudjumper offworld, and you know Port Kalla far better."

"Trust my judgment, Padawan. If any of the Dolander has been poisoned by these droids, my powers as a healer might prove necessary. There is a man in Port Kalla who can defeat this droid's defenses and learn much from it. You must find Lowghen Badra and ask for his help."

You recognize the name. "You've spoken of him, Master. Isn't he a pilot?"

Niquon nods. "And a technician. He has little patience for Jedi nowadays, but he'll help us. He's saved my life on more than one occasion, and his skills are unequalled. Take my lightsaber," he adds.

"Are you expecting trouble, Master? No one knows I'm going."

"No one that we know of," he replies. "Go, now. Every second lost may cost lives."

Go to 1.

1

A few minutes later, you find yourself in the cockpit of Niquon's cloudjumper, with his lightsaber clipped to your belt. You've piloted the craft before, even alone, but this is different. Niquon is heading toward certain danger, and you're heading toward something entirely uncertain, alone.

You kick in the thrusters and roar into the sky on a pillar of white flame. A hundred instruments glitter around you as the dull half-light of the clouds evaporates and the vastness of space opens up to you. Yabosta, your destination, looms ahead, a blue-white disc. You set your course.

Behind you, in the small passenger compartment that doubles as a cargo hold, you hear a snapping noise, then a brief rustle. Niquon had fit the tiny droid with a restraining bolt, but somehow it's overriding the device. It whizzes madly through the passenger compartment, streams of sparks shooting from the restraining bolt. The droid acts furious and confused, like a trapped insect—complete with a deadly stinger!

If you want to subdue the droid without destroying it, go to 30. If you'd rather be safe than sorry and attack the droid with your lightsaber, go to 28.

2

With the malfunctioning droid bound and solidly re-restrained, you settle back into the cockpit just as you enter Port Kalla's air space. A few minutes later, the ship is docked and you're walking the spaceport concourse. Beyond an illuminated metal archway you find the streets of Port Kalla drenched in warm rain. You walk through the archway into a large plaza.

There you summon a holographic map from a public terminal and locate Lowghen Badra's neighborhood—it looks like a short walk from here. You trace a finger across the glowing lines of the map in the sputtering rain and commit them to memory.

You feel a disturbance in the Force, a warning.

You're certain you just felt eyes on you, that someone was observ-

ing your progress. You turn sharply and scan your surroundings.

Make a Spot check. If you roll a 17 or less, go to 12. If you roll an 18 or more, go to 20.

3

The bite of her lightsaber is your last sensation before the world whips crazily around you like churning water. You can't breathe and your eyes won't focus. You see only the light of her blade, and then nothing.

You have been slain, and your adventure ends here. **The End.**

4

Your opponent has a single Force Point to spend, and she decides to spend it now! Roll 2d6 to determine her Force-Based bonus. She's calling on the dark side of the Force to enhance her abilities dramatically, and this bonus will apply to her next attack roll (it adds to her existing +2 Attack Bonus). Return to the combat at 11, and continue until one of you emerges as the victor.

Combat

This adventure uses some of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* rules. Sometimes the adventure will give you special instructions of what to do in combat. Otherwise, use the rules below.

INITIATIVE

Before the fight begins, check to see which combatant goes first: roll a d20 and add your Initiative modifier (+1). Roll the d20 again for your foe, adding the enemy's modifier, noted in the adventure. If your roll is higher, you attack first. If your roll is lower, your foe attacks first. You each attack in turn from then on, until the fight is ended.

ATTACKING

You attack by rolling 1d20 and adding your Attack modifier (+2). If the result is equal to or greater than your foe's Defense score, you score a hit! Roll 2d8+1 (your total damage with a lightsaber) and subtract that much from your foe's Vitality. If your foe's Vitality ever drops to zero, go to "ending the fight," below. If you miss, or if your foe still has Vitality left, it's now your foe's turn to attack you.

BEING ATTACKED

This is just like attacking, but you're rolling for your foe against you! Roll 1d20 and add your foe's Attack Modifier. If the result is equal to or better than your Defense score, you're hit! Roll the amount of damage indicated in the text and subtract it from your Vitality. If you still have Vitality left, it's your turn to attack. If your Vitality drops to zero, go to "ending the fight," below.

ENDING THE FIGHT

You and your opponent attack in turn until one of you loses all Vitality. The character with Vitality left over is the winner of the fight. The adventure will let you know what happens next.



5

Her strokes are wide, angry, and sloppy, and she finally gives you the opportunity to finish the duel. You take it, sliding your blade inward and pulling it out to the side—the “finishing stroke” Master Niquon has been teaching you for months. Her eyes lock on yours, and then become empty and lifeless. She slides quietly to the ground.

You pick up her lightsaber and clip it to your belt. Make a note of this new item on your character sheet.

You climb aboard the cloudjumper and have the engines fired up just as Lowghen arrives, limping slightly but with a determined grin. He climbs into the cockpit beside you just as the spaceport’s automated traffic-control system begins demanding that you stay grounded pending an investigation of reports of a battle in the plaza.

“Ignore it,” says Lowghen. “We’ve got a job to get done. Let’s get out of here.”

You lift the craft off the landing pad and into the sky, shedding the gravity of Yabosla for the freedom of space. You set a course for Skalokor.

You may use Heal Self to restore lost Vitality at this time (see The Use the Force Sidebar). Then, go to 39.

6

You approach her with a helpful smile despite the feeling that something’s amiss. “I remember you from earlier,” you say. “You were watching me in the plaza. Are you in trouble? Is there something I can do to help you?”

She smiles in the gloom. “You can die.” She leaps to one side, and a thin slice of purplish-red light slides into existence to the other, both flying forward before you can get your bearings!

You stumble backward and barely activate Niquon’s lightsaber in time to raise it to your defense. You’ve tripped over some cables, and steady yourself as her attacks come in a flurry of violet light.

You have been surprised. Go to 11 to engage in battle, but the girl gets a free attack before you roll initiative. Against her first attack,

your Defense will be 13 until it’s your turn to attack. If you survive her first attack, continue the fight as instructed, with your Defense restored to 14.

7

Niquon was right about Badra’s skills. An hour later, the little black droid exists only as piles of sorted components. Badra works with concentration, and you watch from a nearby stool, sipping at a bowl of Notha broth. Badra is running a series of tests on one of several vials of green liquid from within the droid’s frame.

Lowghen sits up, looking worried. “A lot of people could die soon if we aren’t fast, kid.”

“What have you learned?”

“The poison in this droid is Drethi venom,” he explains. “It’s drawn from the glands of a winged beast bred thousands of years ago to kill Jedi.” He holds the vial up to the light, but the venom remains murky. “The poison breaks down quickly, so this stuff is already losing its potency. It would kill you, certainly, but it’s no longer a danger to an ordinary person. In another few hours, it’ll be no danger to anyone. In fact, expired Drethi venom is the only known treatment for fresh Drethi venom. They’ll need this stuff back on Skalokor.”

“Why would it kill me and not another?”

“You’re highly sensitive to the Force. This poison burns when the Force flows. Not even the most powerful Jedi healers can combat it. Even the antidote can only delay death for a Jedi, unless it’s administered immediately after the poison. A long time ago, Niquon fought against a group that had rediscovered the Drethi. I was his pilot then.”

If you think there’s no time to lose, go to 38.

If you ask him why he asked, earlier, if Niquon might be dead, go to 22.

8

You tumble through the archway to safety; they didn’t touch you! Go to 35.

You crouch between the cockpit and passenger compartment, watching the droid carefully. When it seems trapped in a spin, you slip into the compartment, staying low beneath its confused sensors. You find yourself directly beneath it: now all you need to do is get the webbing over it and drag it to the ground. Make a **Melee Attack** (roll a d20 and add your **Melee Attack Bonus** of +3) against the droid's current **Defense** of 12.

If you roll a 12 or higher, go to 21. If you roll under 12, go to 13.

10

You feel instantly dizzy as the long needle slips deep into the muscle of your arm, pumping poison into your bloodstream. A few seconds later, the blurry image of the cloudjumper's interior goes black, as your eyesight falls.

Struggling to control your panic, you call upon the Force to heal your wound and fight the poison, but as you open your mind to it, there is a hideous burning, as if the poison feeds on your connection with the Force. The world goes silent. **The End**

11

"My masters will be pleased," she says, adopting a martial pose, with the blade almost vertical between you. "They knew Niquon had sent away a flunkie, but they must not have noticed your braid. They didn't think you were worth sending Von Totha or the Droids after, so they sent me and some idiot Rodians. I've never killed a Jedi before. This'll be fun."

The girl leaps, your blades clash, and you are in battle with a servant of the dark side.

Use the **Combat sidebar**, and apply any special rules you were given in the previous paragraph. In addition, keep track of the number of turns taken (attacks made) by your opponent. If the combat is resolved before she makes her third attack, go to either 5 or 3 as noted below. However, if it's her turn to attack for a third time, pause the combat and read 4 before continuing.

Go to 5 if you defeat the Dark Jedi, or go to 3 if she defeats you.

12

A small human girl watches you from across the plaza. She meets your gaze with a neutral expression, not even turning to pretend she wasn't looking. After this brief acknowledgement, however, she turns and ducks into a cantina. You look inside, but you see hundreds of aliens weaving between drinking and gambling chambers... and at least three other exits. She chose a handy watching post.

You return to business, walking toward the dwelling of Lowghen Badra. Go to 23.

13

No good! The droid has spotted you and stabilized its flight. It whistles sharply and lunges. You must fight. Go to 28.

Use the Force!

Even an inexperienced Jedi apprentice can call on the Force in useful ways. You use the Force by rolling a d20 and adding the **Skill Bonus** appropriate to your action (to use **Battlemind**, for example, you roll a d20+6, because you have a +6 **Battlemind** skill). The result determines what benefit (if any) you receive.

Using the Force requires the expenditure of a small amount of personal energy. It immediately reduces your **Vitality** score. Using a Force skill costs **Vitality** even if it grants no benefit. Choose wisely when using the Force; if you waste your **Vitality**, you will be easier to defeat if you are attacked.

BATTLEMIND (+6)

You can choose to use this skill only when you are sent to the **Combat Sidebar**. You can use it once per fight, and the effects last until the fight ends. **Vitality Cost:** 2

Roll	Benefit
5-14	+2 to your Attack Bonus
15-24	+3 to your Attack Bonus
25-34	+4 to your Attack Bonus

ENHANCE ABILITY (+6)

You can choose to use this skill only when the adventure mentions it. The effects last as long as the adventure specifies. **Vitality Cost:** 2

Roll	Benefit
Up to 14	No Benefit
15-19	+1 to your Strength or Dexterity bonus
20-24	+2 to your Strength or Dexterity bonus
25-29	+3 to your Strength or Dexterity bonus

HEAL SELF (+4)

You can choose to use this skill only when the adventure mentions it. The restored **Vitality** lasts until it is lost to further Force use or injury. **Vitality Cost:** Zero, except on result 1-9. Note that you cannot exceed your starting **Vitality**. Any extra points you regain are ignored.

Roll	Benefit
1-9	You gain nothing, and the cost is 1 Vitality .
10-14	You regain 1d4+1 Vitality points (no cost).
15-19	You regain 1d6+2 Vitality points (no cost).
20-24	You regain 1d8+4 Vitality points (no cost).

USING YOUR FORCE POINTS

You have a single **Force Point** you can spend to call directly on the Force to aid you at a vital juncture. You may use it at any time in the adventure when making a d20 roll. Using the **Force Point** adds 1d6 to that roll (only), or 2d6 if you elect to call on the dark side, instead (if you do, note on your character sheet that Nason has earned a **Dark Side Point**). Remember that you have only one **Force Point** to spend, so choose your time carefully.



14

The droid attacks, shooting forward in a swirl of angry sparks. You move to defend yourself, but the tiny machine surprises you with a sudden burst of speed.

If this is your first time being sent to this entry, go to 37. If this is your second time, go to 10.

15

The girl is hardly more than a silhouette, wreathed in steam from a nearby hydro-exhaust. She watches you with large, dark eyes but does not move. Maybe she's an enemy—or maybe she needs your help.

If you approach her with caution, go to 34.

If you trust her good intentions and approach as a friend, go to 6.

16

Argh! You tumble through the archway, headfirst and dizzy. Roll 3d6 and subtract the result from your Vitality score.

If your Vitality is more than zero, you can scramble past the archway into the spaceport. Once in the spaceport, you can use Heal Self to restore lost Vitality Points (see the Use the Force Sidebar). Then ignore the next paragraph and go to 35.

If this reduces your Vitality to less than zero, you are too stunned to avoid a second hail of blaster fire and the Rodians finish you off. **The End.**

17

From behind you, the sharp report of Lowghen's blaster pistol rises above the screaming wind, and several bright bolts of energy sink deep into the Drethi. It recoils only slightly, but for just a moment, the Drethi is distracted, its ire divided.

Subtract 6 vitality from the Drethi. If it has any vitality left, battle for another round, then go to 26 if you and the Drethi both have Vitality points remaining. Otherwise, go to 31 if you defeat the Drethi, or go to 33 if it defeats you.

18

You lose your grip and plummet into the darkness below. **The End.**

19

Lowghen bundles the remains of the droid in a large cloth, buckles a holstered blaster pistol around his waist, and then sets the locks on his shop. A few minutes later, the two of you are moving quickly through the rain, weaving through the convoluted streets of Port Kaila. At last, you come to the large plaza outside the spaceport where your cloudjumper is berthed.

Blaster bolts fly from a nearby rooftop, and then from behind a large illuminated board. Humans and aliens scatter in all directions, milling in a general panic. You and Lowghen respond quickly, taking cover behind two metal pillars. You scan for the source of the shots and see two groups of Rodians dressed in street clothes and looking pleased. One of them is loading a huge blaster rifle with a fresh power pack.

Lowghen hisses, "Go on, I can hold 'em off from here. They picked a poor spot for an ambush. Get to the cloudjumper and deliver that antidote." Before you can respond, a fresh hail of blaster-fire arcs across the stones of the plaza. Lowghen sends a stream of answering fire toward the group on the roof, forcing them to take cover.

Armed only with a lightsaber, you're of little use in this firefight. Go to 29.

20

A small human girl watches you from across the plaza. She meets your gaze with a neutral expression, not even turning to pretend she wasn't looking. After this brief acknowledgement, however, she turns and ducks into a cantina. Her cape billows briefly, and you notice the unmistakable glint of a lightsaber hanging at her belt!

You hurry into the cantina after her, but you're immediately surrounded by hundreds of aliens swaying between drinking and gambling chambers . . . and at least three other exits. She chose a handy watching-post; there's no way to know where she's gone.

Was she a Jedi? She looked young, so she'd probably be a Padawan, like you. The lightsaber is the weapon of your order, but

you know that others have sabers, too—former Jedi, slayers of Jedi, looters of battlefields, and members of shadowy orders you know little about. Which was she?

You return to business, walking toward the dwelling of Lowghen Badia. Make a note on your character sheet that you've seen the girl's secret, and then go to 21.

21

Success! You sling the black webbing over the spinning droid and entangle it, following through with a sharp tug that brings the droid crashing into a cushioned seat. It squeals angrily, spitting sparks and pulling against its new prison, but it is trapped. You fish around in the ship's small tool compartment, find a fresh restraining bolt, and fix it to the droid. The tiny machine falls silent, once again inert. Go to 2.

22

"Because you carry his lightsaber," Lowghen says. "Niquon wouldn't let that saber out of his sight unless he believed he might fail, or be taken."

"We need to hurry back to Yabosta, let's get to your cloudjumper."

Go to 19.

23

It's a rainy night, so you're grateful for the colorful light provided by the gaudy signs on the local shops. Weaving through twisting streets and under busy pedestrian bridges, you arrive at your destination.

Rain spatters loudly on a rusted metal sign: "Badra's Engineering and Repair." A single light comes from a worn plastic panel beside the door. You press it and hear a deep buzzing sound inside, then silence. Then, the door opens with a grating sound and warm light spills out. A tall, broad human with a short gray beard and bushy eyebrows stands in the doorway, looking down. "It's late," he says. "Come back in the morning." Then he notices that you are obviously a Jedi Padawan. "Who are you?"

"My name is Nason Laric," you reply. "I've been sent by Master

Niquon to request your aid." You remember what Niquon said, about his lightsaber identifying you to Lowghen. You make sure it's plainly visible at your side. Lowghen's scowl melts into a look of concern, and he looks you in the eye.

"Is Niquon dead?" he asks, his tone serious.

"No," you reply. "But there is danger."

"I'll bet there is," Lowghen says. "Come in."

Go to 7.

24

You remember what weapon she carried. If she were an ally, she would have identified herself by now. You're certain she's a threat, so you approach in readiness, mindful of the moment.

"Niquon's apprentice," she says, smiling. "It seems I have the honor of killing a very important person." With that, the blade of her lightsaber flashes to life—a deep purplish crimson, adding a menacing depth to the gloom of the hangar.

You're ready for her as she leaps forward to attack. You sidestep effortlessly, placing a dangling metal cable between you and her, and buy yourself a moment to prepare. You ignite your Master's saber, and she glares at the brilliant white glow.

If you wish, you can take this time to use the Force to enhance your abilities for the duration of this encounter. If you choose to do so, see Battlemind in the Use the Force Sidebar.

Make a note of the temporary boost in your Attack Bonus and proceed to 11.

25

You twist and lunge, sliding the lightsaber's tip directly at the vulnerable repulsor array.

A hideous whistle screeches from the droid, and a spray of hot sparks showers your face. But you know not to fear, and you brought the lightsaber directly home, burning neatly through the droid's motivator without disturbing the explosives. It falls with a solid thunk onto the deck and sneeps pitifully, extending and retracting its needle, vainly trying to poison you.

Although the droid is defeated, you take care to avoid the needle





as you wrap the droid tightly in a bundle of safety webbing. You fish around in the ship's small tool compartment, and find another restraining bolt. The tiny machine falls silent, once again inert. You may use Heal Self to restore lost Vitality Points at this time (see the Use the Force Sidebar). Go to 2.

26

Niquon reaches out both with his hand and with the Force, and the mountaineer's pike flies into his grip. The effort costs him so much pain that he can't conceal an agonized groan as he hurls the weapon at the Drethi.

Subtract 4 vitality from the Drethi. If it has any vitality left, continue the battle until either you or the Drethi runs out of vitality. Go to 31 if you defeat the Drethi, or go to 33 if it defeats you.

27

Make a Move Silently check to sneak up on the droid. Roll 1d20 and add 1. If you used the Force and gained an additional bonus, add that, too.

If the total is 14 or less, go to 13. If the total is 15 or more, go to 9.

28

Niquon's lightsaber feels heavy in your hand as you ignite the blade. It springs to life, adding a new cast of pale light to the blinking surface of the angry little droid. You know it could be a mistake to destroy the thing, but you must defend yourself and the cloud-jumper. It lunges at you clumsily, whizzing past your head and ricocheting off a bulkhead back toward the center of the compartment. It rotates slowly, turning a pale green optic sensor toward you.

At the base of the droid's spherical body is its repulsor array—the source of its movement. Right next to it is one of the explosive devices that Niquon pointed out. You must cripple the former without disturbing the latter. You are in combat with the droid!

**Malfunctioning
Assassin Droid**
Defense: 15
Initiative: +1
Hypo Attack: +0

Resolve the fight using the Combat sidebar. If you hit the droid, you win! Go to 25. If the droid's hypo attack hits you, end the fight and go to 14.

29

You sprint across the plaza, moving quickly across the rain-slicked stone as blaster shots score the ground behind you. The shots are few, however, and random, because Lowghen Badra is laying down a more impressive wall of counter-fire than you would have imaged he could.

You have one last leap through the archway into the spaceport proper, and a fresh hail of blaster fire threatens to cut it short. Make an attack roll for the Rodians, using an attack bonus of +3.

If the result is less than your Defense, go to 8. Otherwise go to 16.

30

Running along the top and sides of the cabin are strips of webbing used to stow cargo. You tug down a large segment, keeping your eye on the careening droid. It's flying too wildly to be aware of much, but you get the sense that it's trying to stabilize or repair itself. No time to waste!

You must be stealthy to attack before the droid can sense you. If you use the Force to increase your chances, go to 36. If you prefer to trust your reflexes without calling on the Force, go to 27.

31

The Drethi explodes with a final scream, shattering into fragments that burn into dust before your eyes. The wind stops suddenly, and a vast cloud of black ash settles gently to the flagstones, a shadow in the shape of a terrible evil. Niquon falls hard on the stones, crying out in pain. You rush to his side.

You hear a hissing sound coming from many of his wounds—a hideous sizzle of the poison eating him alive. Niquon's gaze is fixed and nearly empty.

One by one, the Dolandu retake the streets of Stomorr, and several approach you. One of them is Borta, weeping and terrified.

"Protector!" he cries. "He has fallen! There is nothing we can do!" Lowghen speaks up. "No, Nason Laric has saved you, old one. This

vial contains an antidote that will cure your leaders."

Borta stares at you as if he's only just recognized you. "Nason! You have done it! You have saved us from the poison?"

You nod, retrieve Niquon's lightsaber from the ground, and clip it to his belt. "Your leaders will be fine, Borta, as will your protector."

"Fentana Dramayal!" he shouts. "Two protectors, now!" The Dolando cheer. **The End**

32

The girl is hardly more than a silhouette, wreathed in steam from a nearby hydro-exhaust. She watches you with large, dark eyes but does not move. You're not sure if she's friend or foe. Your feelings tell you that something is wrong.

If you draw your lightsaber, go to 24.

If you approach her with caution but do not expose your weapon, go to 34.

If you approach her as a friend, trusting that she is a Jedi apprentice, like you, go to 6.

33

The Drethi's claws tear through your flesh and dig deep into your body. The creature's poison burns hot and bright in your mind as it seeks out every thread that connects you to the Force and incinerates it.

You have been slain, and your adventure ends here. **The End.**

34

You walk toward the cloudjumper's landing pad, making it plain that you intend to pass her. "Please stand aside," you say. "I must go."

"No," she says with a grin, and light springs from her hand, extending into a bar of deep purplish-crimson. Her lightsaber! She moves toward you.

You didn't expect such a sudden attack, but you were prepared for anything. Your hand moves in a flash, and Niquon's lightsaber springs to life. You raise it to defend yourself. Go to 11.

35

A cadre of spaceport security guards jogs toward the scene of the ambush. Since you're running away from it like everyone else, they ignore you. You're sure there are enough of them to allow Lowghen to slip away while they deal with the Rodians. You hurry to the cloudjumper's bay.

The bay is still and dark when you arrive, but there is a single figure waiting in front of the cloudjumper. It's the girl who was watching you when you first arrived on Yabosta.

If you've seen the girl's secret, go to 32. If you haven't, go to 15.

36

You use the Enhance Ability skill to increase your Dexterity. See the Use the Force sidebar for details. If this grants you an additional Dexterity bonus, make a note of it. (Your Defense, Initiative, and Move Silently rolls all get this bonus too.) It lasts until your encounter with the malfunctioning droid is over. Go to 27.

37

The droid's needle slices neatly through the fabric of your robe and scrapes painfully across your shoulder. You feel a flash of pain as a tiny drop of the poison seeps into the open wound. It feels like your entire body is on fire!

The droid is spinning in the air again, fighting to regain control of its senses as you do the same. You win your struggle a moment sooner, and continue the fight—but the tiny scrape of poison has permanently scarred your shoulder. Make a note of the scar, and return to the battle at 28!

38

"We'll have time to talk later, kid. Right now, two things are worrying me." He taps some of the droid parts with a tool. "The first is these traps on the droid. They're good, but they're nothing special. Niquon could have bypassed them with little effort. I'm sure of it. The second . . . well, like I said: Drethi venom doesn't last very long, and there's no good way to preserve it that I know of. Which means either the owners of this droid have found a way, or there's a live Drethi in the system. We need to hurry back to Yabosta. Let's get to your cloudjumper."

Make a note on your character sheet that you've learned a Drethi might be in the system, and then go to 19.

39

As you near Skalokor, the cloudjumper picks up the faint beeping of a homing signal. Niquon has activated his personal trans-

ponder to let you know that he's no longer at the sanctuary.

"He's near a settlement," Lowghen says, looking at the readouts. "Stomorr, a trading center for the Dolando."

From the air, the Stomorr settlement looks as it always does—colorful and cozy, an old town where the locals gather against the cold to trade goods and news.

On the ground, the scene is different. Droids, Rodian mercenaries, and weapons litter the landscape—all destroyed. The streets are deserted; you can see Dolando peering out from windows, terrified. It seems peaceful here, but from the distance you hear a shriek like the howling of the wind and the clash of metal and stone. Rushing to follow the transponder signal, you get to a square on the northern edge of the town, near the mountain's slope.

There you learn why the Dolando have not yet emerged from their homes. A beast walks the square, a winged, clawed creature of unnatural darkness. Its wings are shredded, but it moves with grace and malice. Master Niquon lies nearby, badly wounded. A mountaineer's pike lies on the ground beneath the creature.

Lowghen confirms your suspicion. "A Drethi."

Drethi

Defense: 14

Vitality: 22 (wounded)


Initiative: +3

Melee Attack: +4 Damage: 1d6 + 2

You pull Niquon's saber from your belt and ignite it.

Over Lowghen's shouted protests, you leap into battle. But the Drethi has powers beyond strength and speed. As you raise the lightsaber high to deliver a blow, an icy wind lifts you from the ground and tosses you against a statue. Your back feels about to snap as you fall painfully to your feet, fighting to keep your balance.

Use the Combat sidebar to play out this battle. If you learned earlier that a Drethi might be in the system, you get a free attack on the Drethi before rolling Initiative, and the Drethi's Defense for that round is only 12.

After one round of combat, go to 17 if you and the Drethi both have Vitality points remaining. Otherwise, go to 33 if it defeats you. 

Standoff on Leritor



BY PETER SCHWEIGHOFER

ILLUSTRATED BY MIKAEL NOGUCHI

"Mayday! Mayday! This is the combine-reaper Gevion. We require immediate assistance. A Sauvax army has besieged us, surrounding our harvester and blocking our path. Although they've taken no hostile action, we fear they might swarm the harvester and slaughter our crew. Please send assistance immediately. Mayday!"

"Standoff on Leritor" is a *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* adventure for four to six heroes of 4th–7th level. Since it involves a brushfire conflict between settlers and a native species on an outlying planet, Gamemasters can set the action during any era. The heroes respond to a harvester in distress and discover the settlers and indigenous Sauvax each accuse the other of attacking them. The heroes must mediate a peace, investigate the claims, and deal with a third, previously unknown party who is attacking and enslaving both groups to work a secret archaeological excavation near the northern mountains.

The heroes overhear the Gevion's mayday while passing through the Leritor system or visiting one of the other harvesters on the planet's surface. Perhaps the heroes intend to dock at the Gevion to drop off supplies, load the harvest, or visit a friend. They might have landed at another harvester and—having one of the few swift vessels on the planet—receive a request from the captain or an offer from the crew to investigate the distress signal.

Other settlers on Leritor know that the Gevion works the plains near the eastern shore of the main continent, just south of the Bleaks, a mountain range frequently wracked by storms. When they first arrived years ago, the colonists forged a peaceful Settlement

Pact with the indigenous Sauvax, promising to avoid their coastal habitation region. The settlers are certain the Gevion has not wandered into Sauvax territory, and the sudden siege worries them that the natives might become hostile and endanger all harvesting operations on the planet.

Although the Gevion seems the logical place to begin, the heroes might choose to survey the surrounding area. Use the map of the coastal region for a sense of various interesting features in the harvester's vicinity.

The heroes can access additional information about Leritor, the Sauvax, and the Settlement Pact on a successful Gather Information or Knowledge (galactic history) check (DC 15). If they've already landed at another harvester on Leritor, they can also glean this information from conversations with the crew.

Leritor

Years ago colonists fleeing the urban sprawl of the Core Worlds settled inland portions of Leritor, an insignificant planet off the Corellian Run near Bothan Space. Although the soil was rich in minerals, the world had little else to attract serious entrepreneurs who might exploit the natural resources. The settlers came with combine-reapers, massive tracked harvesters that tear up the earth, plant crops in their wakes, and return next season to collect the harvest. The reapers serve as industrial platform and settlement for the colonists. Most of the population lives on these mobile combines. The machines operate from a capital situated in the center of the planet's largest continent, more of a sprawling storage depot than a city. Harvesters return once a year to replenish their supplies and repair damaged systems. Combine-reapers range far across the main continent, arrang-



ing with spacers to pick up the crops directly from their landing platforms.

Few settlers own weapons, and harvesters mount no defenses. In fleeing the Core Worlds, the colonists unburdened themselves with the stress of urban society and embraced a life of peaceful coexistence with everyone they encounter. They prefer bargaining to open hostility. Most maintain honest and hard-working demeanors; elements they believe contribute to a fulfilling lifestyle.

Leritor orbits its main sequence star during the course of a 322-day year. Local days last 28 hours, with temperatures averaging around 27° centigrade. The temperate climate proves ideal for growing massive crops. Rains blanket the grassy plains every few days, and fall almost continuously in the mountainous regions. Rivers flowing from the highlands meander across the plains, nourishing the soil and eventually emptying into the oceans. Colonists avoid the coastlines out of respect for the Settlement Pact first established with the indigenous Sauvax, who inhabit those regions.

Sauvax

The Sauvax are the only sentient species indigenous to Leritor. These amphibious crustaceans inhabit the coastal regions, growing and hunting food and building villages along the crags, tidal pools, and beaches. On land they propel themselves on six spindly, segmented legs; in water they swim using their underbelly bristles and twin, rudder-like tails. Their faces are set within the apex of the flexible, chitinous shell that covers the bulk of their heads and torsos. Their eyes can bulk out of this carapace for greater visibility, and two delicate antennae augment their senses. Their mouths can formulate most sounds necessary for language. They speak their own tongue, but through infrequent contact with settlers have picked up a minimal understanding of Basic. Their bulky arms seem awkward above ground, and serve as formidable weapons—on each hand two massive digits (one opposed) form an oversized claw, while three smaller digits (one opposed) enable finer manipulation.

Sauvax fashion their own dwellings and tools for daily life, though their civilization

is quite primitive. They most commonly carry a multipurpose spear—called a *gruush* in the natives' language—the head of which consists of a straight, barbed point and a curved hook. They use it to hunt fish in the waters of the continental shelf and cultivate various crops of seaweed and slime in tidal pools. Sauvax live in tribal villages called *kuuvan* (a term that also seems interchangeable with "tribe"), consisting of structures made from stone and buttressed with sand and deadwood. Outsiders understand little of their society and culture since settlers rarely encounter them. Most offworlders who encounter Sauvax view them as brusque, pushy, and intent on pursuing their business with minimal fuss.

Settlement Pact

The first settlers on Leritor encountered the Sauvax during initial planetary surveys. Having the indigenous peoples concentrate their villages along the coast seemed an ideal situation for the colonists, who planned to send their immense combine-reapers across the fertile plains inland. Since the coastal terrain proved difficult for harvesters to navigate and crops to grow, the settlers gladly gave the Sauvax a wide berth.

Representatives from the survey team and the main Sauvax tribe forged a formal Settlement Pact. This agreement forbids any settler, starship, harvester, or off-world presence within 100 kilometers of the coastline and generally ensures peaceful relations between

settlers and Sauvax. It leaves the Sauvax the option of contacting the colonists for trade or other assistance. Envoys from several *kuuvan* have contacted roving harvesters during the intervening years, most often to trade and to learn about offworlder culture. Hostilities have never erupted in all the years colonists have inhabited Leritor.

Besieged Harvester

The *Gevlon's* transponder beacon helps heroes hone in on its location. It rises above the plains about 150 kilometers from the eastern coast. A crowd of innumerable Sauvax surrounds the harvester, impeding further progress. Colonists on the *Gevlon's* top deck wave to the heroes, and a controller on the comm instructs them to set down on the harvester's landing platform. The heroes may follow this protocol, or they may land at a distance and hike to the harvester, dealing with the Sauvax along the way.

The settlers have no idea why the natives suddenly surrounded their harvester. Although the Sauvax haven't attacked—they maintain a good twenty-five meters between their encampment and the combine-reaper's massive treads—their presence prevents the *Gevlon* from harvesting this vast plain of crops. The captain fears that if he harms even one Sauvax by urging

Sauvax Commoner: Init +1; Def 13 [+4 natural armor, -1 Dex]; Spd 10 m. VRRWP —/12; Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, gruush), -1 ranged (1d8, gruush), SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +0; SZ M; EP 0; Rep 0; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.
Equipment: Gruush, variety of personal belongings in woven seaweed satchel
Skills: Craft (varies) +2, Knowledge (varies) +1, Listen +2, Profession (varies) +1, Read/Write Sauvax, Speak Basic, Speak Sauvax, Spot +2, Swim +5.
Species Features: +2 Str, +2 Con, -2 Dex, -2 Cha, Amphibious—does not check for drowning; +4 species bonus on Swim checks, Enhanced senses give +2 to Spot and Listen checks.



Standoff on Leritor

his vehicle forward, he'll incite retribution for breaking the Settlement Pact. If they don't continue soon, the rest of the harvest will rot in the fields and the Gevion's colonist crew could lose its combine-reaper in bankruptcy.

Anyone talking with the Gevion's captain learns that another harvester, the *Nellist*, disappeared several weeks ago in an area to the north, presumably the victim of a similar Sauvax siege. They've heard nothing from the combine-reaper or any survivors.

The harvester's main planting and reaping machinery sits just above the vehicle's massive tread drivers. The next deck contains crop storage bins and packaging

machinery, while the uppermost two decks feature living quarters, recreational facilities, and other amenities for the colonist crew. The control cabin emerges from the foremost point of the top deck, with an outside landing pad aft where the settlers can load packaged crops from cargo lifts onto visiting freighters.

Nobody's gone down to speak with the Sauvax for fear they'll be torn to pieces. Shouting from one of the lower maintenance hatches hasn't garnered any favorable response. The Sauvax stubbornly insist on speaking with someone face-to-face in the clearing they've made before the harvester. To do otherwise (shout from a hatch, use the harvester's speaker system) insults the Sauvax by inferring they're not worthy of direct negotiation.

A sole Sauvax called the tavelor stands on a specially carved rock set before the harvester. Ceremonial trinkets made of driftwood, shells, and coral hang from his clothing; his entourage of burly bodyguards, and the deference others pay him distinguishes him as a leader. Should any heroes emerge from the harvester, the natives move aside, channeling the heroes toward their leader. In broken Basic, the tavelor claims the off-worlders are murderers who ruthlessly killed Sauvax in a village to the north. With angry accusations, he insists that any hero who emerges to parley is a lying killer intent on exterminating all Sauvax. Before the chief curbs his invective and believes anything the heroes say, they must demonstrate they are worthy of parleying honestly. The Gamemaster can suggest ways the heroes can go about proving themselves, or

they can approach the challenge as they see fit. If one method fails, the heroes might try another—the Sauvax remain encamped around the Gevion until someone satisfies them.

Present a Gift: The hero might make a favorable impression by presenting a fine gift to the Sauvax tavelor. Advanced weapons do not impress the natives, but they find bundles of electronic equipment particularly useful: datapads, comlinks, glow rods, holoprojectors, macrobinoculars, or medpacs.

Such a ceremony might consist of a formal speech and a demonstration of the technology offered. A hero must make a Diplomacy check (DC 15) to present the gift without committing any cultural blunders that might offend the tavelor or other Sauvax. For items of particularly high cost (droids, small vehicles, a personal item of great sentimental value), the hero gains a +5 bonus to his Diplomacy roll.

Share a Meal: Food often bridges cultural gaps and heals misunderstandings. The Sauvax invite the heroes to partake of their meal. The heroes must try Sauvax cuisine without showing their distaste for the strange fare: sea-fern greens in a slimy sauce, small crustaceans crawling through cold seaweed soup, baked urchins, stewed anemones, and a variety of raw fish.

Eating most of this food without grimacing, gagging, or otherwise reacting in a disrespectful manner requires a Will save (DC 15). Sauvax reactions to the heroes might vary—from giggling and pointing, to expressions of mild disgust—and they watch the heroes to see how they respond. Heroes gain extra respect for bringing their own food to share.

PARLEY

Once the heroes have proved their worthiness and established a rapport, the tavelor cooperates with their queries. He has no idea what happened to the *Nellist* and denies that any Sauvax attacked the harvester. It never strayed into the Sauvax territory, and the puny weapons of the Sauvax would prove insignificant against such a behemoth. He asks whether the settlers attacked the Sauvax village up the coast, and if not, who else on the planet might have perpetrated such a heinous slaughter.



If the heroes agree to help find the murderers who destroyed the *Kuuvon*, the tavelor orders the Sauvax horde to leave the *Gevion* in peace. He also offers to lead the heroes to inspect the ruins, or to welcome them into his own village to parley further. Back on the harvester, the captain suggests that the heroes could use this opportunity to travel into Sauvax territory to look for the missing *Nellist*.

Sauvax Kuuvon

The Sauvax village lies one day's hike east, or a few minutes' flight time in a repulsorlift vehicle or starship. The collection of stone huts sits along the coast a few meters above the high tide mark. Assuming they've established a good rapport with the tavelor, the heroes receive an invitation to his home, a slightly larger stone house than the others. As long as the heroes listen, the tavelor rambles on about how they've managed to live in peace with the colonists until now, how the Sauvax aren't a warlike people, and how he hopes they can resolve their differences and put an end to the current animosity.

The heroes have free reign throughout the village as long as they act respectfully toward its inhabitants. Many have never seen off-worlders before—some glower from the dim entries to their homes, while others scurry out to greet them and offer food or native talismans. During their wanderings, the heroes might pass the drying racks for fish, an open assembly area with a stone platform for speakers, food storage pits hewn from the rock and covered with crude stone domes, and the tidal pools where seaweed and crustacean crops grow.

The heroes can make Gather Information checks (DC 20) if they wish to discuss matters with residents. Most inhabitants know only hearsay, particularly a collection of terrible assumptions about off-worlders, and a stern belief that settlers attacked and destroyed a *Kuuvon* to the north. Each successful check the heroes make uncovers one of the following bits of information:

- When he discovered the northern village destroyed, a Sauvax farmer noticed that the river flowing nearby was muddy with silt. He also heard infrequent rumbling noises from the nearby mountains but assumed at the time that they were storms rolling through the Bleaks.
- A hunter wandering inland spotted thick plumes of smoke rising from the horizon to the northwest. He would have investigated but became frightened when several large birds rose from the distant site and flew off to their nests in the Bleaks.
- A child comes forward holding a twisted bit of metal he found one day wandering up the coast. A Repair check (DC 20) identifies it as a common starfighter engine component. Without regular maintenance, these components eventually loosen within their fittings and tear free. The heroes should remember the colonists have no starfighters, and only freighters collect the harvest from combine-reapers.

Destroyed Harvester

Heroes exploring the region northwest of the Sauvax village or directly north of the *Gevion*'s position eventually discover the wreck of another harvester, the missing *Nellist*. Airborne heroes can see the hulk with a successful Spot (DC 18) or Computer Use check using sensors (DC 12). Heroes traveling on the ground (on foot,

repulsorlift vehicle, or tracked harvester) find the wrecked combine-reaper with a successful Spot check (DC 25) or signs of its passage using the Track feat (DC 22 Survival check).

The burned-out metal husk sits amid unharvested fields. Much of the outer shell remains perched precariously upon the tread-drivers, but the interior is twisted and scorched—each minute the heroes explore inside there is a 10% chance of their passage causing a collapse. Randomly select one searching hero for each collapse to make a Reflex save (DC 20) or suffer 6d6 points of damage.

Heroes with the Track feat (and others that make a successful DC 10 Wisdom check) notice the general absence of signs that a massive horde of Sauvax passed this area—those crowding around the *Gevion* earlier left a swath of trampled crops and foliage in their path. The harvested path behind the *Nellist* leads to the west, an unlikely approach for any Sauvax force, which would have retreated eastward to the coastline after an attack. A successful Search check (DC 25) reveals a thin trail leading to an area of trampled crops a short distance away. It seems a large craft landed here, possibly loading soldiers and prisoners marched from the wreckage.

A general examination of the area around the *Nellist* reveals several bodies, elderly colonists slain with Sauvax *gruvush* spears. Broken spears litter the area around the harvester's damaged treads.

A successful Repair check (DC 20) reveals that starship-mounted blasters caused the damage that disabled the *Nellist* and that the combine-reaper could never have exploded from the exterior hits—it must have ground to a halt first, then exploded from within from secondary damage or intentional sabotage.

Heroes scanning the horizon to the east notice a thin wisp of smoke with a successful Spot check (DC 20). This is the slavers' camp (see *River Camp* below).

Slaughtered Village

The slaughtered Sauvax *kuuvon* lies on a spit of land where a river flows into the ocean. The collection of stone huts, storage pits, drying racks, assembly area, and even the aquaculture tidal pools were blasted to pieces by blasters.

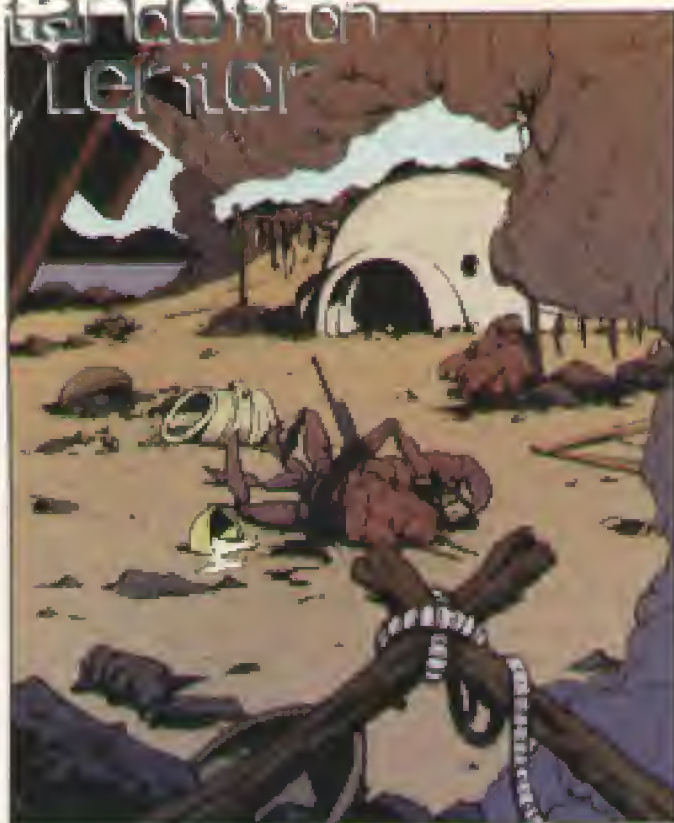
Like the wrecked harvester, only a few bodies remain in the village. Unless the heroes have some familiarity with Sauvax physiology (or bring along a Sauvax guide), they have no way of identifying whether those left here were weak or elderly.

If any of the heroes use a sensor pack to analyze the water and soil, a successful Search check (DC 10) reveals that the river and ocean water near the village contains enough minerals to kill small animals and eventually weaken and kill larger creatures. The most concentrated amounts of silt float down the river and become diluted in the saltwater surf.

Heroes combing the ruins discover two distinctly offworld items among the debris with a successful Search check (DC 15): a depleted medpac in a storage pit, and a pair of binders wedged into a crack in a stone building.

While examining the wreckage, the heroes startle a hiding juvenile Sauvax. She immediately tries running away when discovered, unless the heroes prove their peaceful intentions or have another Sauvax among them. When questioned, the young native claims that immense birds descended upon the *kuuvon*, spit fire, and

Standoff on Lethior



destroyed many homes. Then soldiers came, rounded everyone up, and fed them into a giant creature that descended from the sky. It flew off with the other birds into the Bleaks to the north.

River Camp

As the heroes approach this location, they spot two snub fighters swooping down from the sky and strafing an area ahead. They belong to the slavers running the excavation in the Bleaks and were dispatched to track down and eliminate two escaped slaves. Heroes in their own starship may engage these fighters or decide to stay low and evade them for now. After the attack, the starfighters retreat off toward the mountains to the northeast.

The area the snub fighters attacked was a small encampment on the riverbank where two branches of the river flow from the Bleaks. One of the branches is choked with silt (with properties similar to

the water found near the slaughtered Sauvax village) while the other one remains clear.

The camp consisted of two crude lean-tos and a cooking fire. When the heroes arrive, they find the bodies of three colonists and two Sauvax among the blasted debris. Their clothes hang off their bodies in tatters, and all of them have the remains of binders clamped around one of their wrists. A Treat Injury check (DC 10) reveals they are emaciated, overworked, and even beaten in some places. A closer inspection reveals clumps of mineral dust caked in crevices—the same minerals running in the river silt.

Slave Excavation

Captured settlers and Sauvax provide slave labor for an excavation site hidden among the mountainous Bleaks. The excavation is the source of the pollution downstream. The recent attacks were designed to convince the settlers that the natives were responsible, and vice versa. Under the direction of Profex Rynalla—a noble scholar from the University of Sanbra—the dig slowly uncovered an ancient starship that crashed here centuries ago. Rynalla secretly researches the lost ways of the Sith and other archaic Jedi traditions, honing her Force powers along the way. She hopes to unearth a legendary Sith artifact from within the wrecked starship: the Bracers of Najus.

Heroes easily find the excavation by following the silty river into the foothills on foot, by starship, or using the *Gevion* to plow through the light forest. The waters widen to a slow flowing river where it passes the slave camp.

The site sits along the river's edge near a bank of cliffs. The slaves labor to unearth the ancient starship, tossing dirt excavated from the vast depression against one side of the enclosure, where a stream washes the silt into the river. A charged fence encloses the site and the entrance to slave quarters hewn at the base of the cliff. A prefab guard tower rises at each corner, at various intervals along the fence, and on both flanks of the only exit portal. Several prefab support buildings stand outside this gate (barracks, supply shed, mess hall), and an area cleared of debris and underbrush provides landing facilities for the slavers' three snub fighters and single bulk freighter. A generator powers the complex, while a small office shed provides a command post when Rynalla isn't at the site overseeing operations from her suite in the bulk freighter.

The excavation area consists of a wide, shallow pit from which pieces of the downed starship emerge. Teams of slaves dig away at various areas, concentrating on one side that exposes a hatch to the vessel's interior. A line of slaves extends from here, dragging baskets of dirt and debris from within and depositing it in the pile along the perimeter fence. Humans excavate the ground-level areas and the dry parts of the starship interior. Since much of the wreck lies below the water table, only the amphibious Sauvax can work the deeper corridors. A team of five Klatoolinan guards keeps approximately 50 slaves in line by constantly prodding them with heavy blaster pistols and beating them with stun batons.

Several caves riddle the lower part of the cliffside. The slaves make their homes here, though they have little strength to try tunneling out. Banks of lumas on the two nearest guard towers illuminate the cliffs at night, preventing anyone from climbing the rocks to freedom.

SLAVER SNUB FIGHTERS

Core Galaxy System PTR-3 Vedette

Class: Starfighter	Initiative: +6 (+2 size, +4 crew)
Size: Tiny (10.5 m long)	Crew: 1 (Skilled +4)
Hyperdrive: None	Maneuver: +6 (+2 size, +4 crew)
Passengers: None	Defense: 22 (+2 size, +10 armor)
Cargo Capacity: 50 kg	Shield Points: 20
Consumables: 1 day	Hull Points: 100 (DR 5)

Cost: 75,000 credits (new), 30,000 credits (used)

Maximum Speed: Ramming (9 squares)

Atmospheric Speed: 1,080 km/h (18 squares/action)

Weapon: Laser Cannon, Fire Arc: Front, Attack Bonus: +6 (+2 size, +3 crew, +4 fire control), Damage: 4d10+7, Range Modifier: PB +0, 5-2, M/L n/a



Since they're convinced nobody on Leritor knows of the hidden encampment, the sentries spend more of their time making sure slaves don't escape than watching for attacks from outside.

Two sentries occupy each guard tower, one scanning the camp while the other leans on the light repeating blasters (3d8, crit 19–20) mounted on the railing hooked into power supplies in the tower base. Two pairs of guards patrol the perimeter outside the fence.

A large fusion generator unit provides the compound's power and charges the fence. Anyone touching the wires sustains 2d8 points of electrical damage each round. The guards in the flanking towers control the lock on the main gate, though heroes can bypass the lock with a Disable Device check (DC 15). The buildings and guard towers consist of prefab units hastily erected on the site. Walls have a hardness of 10 and 36 Wound Points, while doors have a hardness of 10 and 24 Wound Points. Door control panels have a simple security routine requiring a Disable Device check (DC 10) to circumvent. Banks of furnas mounted atop the guard towers light the facility at all times.

Players can use the compound map to plan any strategy of diversion and attack they wish to execute. At the first sign of any disturbance, guards hustle loose slaves back into the caves and prevent any from leaving. The two patrols watching the perimeter make a dash for the snub fighters to provide some air cover. Sentries in the towers scan the camp and its environs for the source of any attack, pouring fire from the light repeating blasters anywhere they suspect enemy activity.

If the heroes assault the encampment, Rynalla coordinates the response to any attack from her suite aboard the bulk freighter parked in the clearing near the snub fighters. She maintains contact with her guards by comlink to assess the situation initially and then to direct them to confront the heroes. Meanwhile, she finds a position where she can safely view the action from a distance—along the river near the snub fighter landing area offers her this view and easy access to her freighter. Rynalla assists her guards by subtly employing her



Slaver Guards: Male Klatonian Soldier 2, Int 13 (Dex); Def 10 (+3 class, +3 Dex), Spd 10m, VP/WP 18/12; Atk +3 melee (special, stunbaton) or +5 ranged (3d8, blaster rifle), 5Q Unswerving loyalty, DR 2, SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1, SZ M, FP 0, DSP N, Rep +1, Str 13, Dex +6, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 7, Challenge Code 0
Equipment: Blast vest and helmet, blaster rifle, comlink, stunbaton, 25 credits
Skills: Intimidate +1, Listen +3, Pilot +4, Search +2, Speak Basic, Speak Muttese, Spot +3, Treat Injury +1
Feats: Alertness, Armor Proficiency (light), Point Blank Shot, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifle, heavy weapons, simple weapons, vibroweapons)

Standoff on Leritor

Force skills: Empathy, Force Grip, Force Strike, Force Lightning, and Move Object. If her guards take a beating, Rynalla orders them to retreat to her freighter to regroup. When the guards counterattack, Rynalla sneaks around for a surprise assault on the heroes' flank. Here she employs her Force feats and skills to enhance her own performance in combat, closing quickly and engaging the most powerful hero personally when the guards have diverted his or her attention. Although she's a scholar, Rynalla handles herself well in the field, augmenting her weapon skills with the Force abilities she's picked up during her years secretly researching the Sith. (For a greater challenge, the Gamemaster might assume she's already discovered the Bracers of Najus and allow her to use them in the final confrontation.)

1. Excavation Office

This small shack contains the compound's only computer, a subspace transceiver, makeshift cargo-crate furniture, and a simple camp bed. The chief slaver uses this as an impromptu command center when Rynalla isn't on site. A Computer Use check (DC 20) gives heroes access to the computer's files—they contain data about basic excavation operations and supply records. If the check succeeds by 10 or more, the heroes also stumble upon clues revealing Rynalla's hidden affiliation with the University of Sanbra's ancient history department, and her notes about the owners of the lost ship, its Sith passengers, and the artifact she seeks.

2. Generator

The camp's fusion generator runs power along aerial or underground cables to every prefab building, the guard towers, and the fence. A Disable Device check (DC 15) shuts it down, and a Demolitions check (DC 25) sabotages it to explode.

3. Slave Quarters

The slaves live in a warren of caves surround the base of the rock cliff. When not sleeping off their exhaustion, they try to enhance the accommodations of these meager caves as best they can. Half of the

slaves work at the dig every five hours while the other half rest in the pens.

The slaves prove pitiful combatants in their weakened states (all slaves are Human and Sauvax commoners in a constant state of fatigue), but could become a diversion for the guards if freed. They have nothing to lose trying to make a break for the main gate during the confusion. They also might climb the pile of dirt from the excavation to have a better chance at escaping over the perimeter fence. As the heroes succeed in assaulting the compound, the sentries guarding the slaves become more distracted and fearful for their own safety.

4. Excavation Site

A shallow pit exposes parts of an ancient starship wreck. Excavations cleared away significant portions from parts of the vessel, particularly a clearing near one of the exterior hatches. Slaves emerge from this area hauling buckets of rock and soil, which they dump into the pile of tailings along the nearby perimeter fence.

The starship passageways meander deeper underground down a gradual slope. Most eventually lead into flooded corridors and cabins. Every two days the guards evict all the slaves and inspect the works to make sure nobody's digging an escape route or using salvaged materials to plan an uprising. During these times Rynalla also searches the unflooded areas for clues about the missing Sith artifact. In emergencies, a few guards block the hatch and keep slaves at bay with their blaster rifles.

5. Pile of Tailings

The slaves dump the debris hauled from the pit and starship interior onto a large pile of tailings. It spills out through the electrified fence into a stream that slowly erodes the pile into the river. Every two days the guards remove any long pieces of wreckage or other materials the slaves might use to effect an escape, then flatten the pile down to deny slaves an easy way of vaulting the fence.

Climbing to the top of the tailing pile near the perimeter fence requires a Climb check (DC 10); however, heroes must still deal with the remaining two meters of fence to get over the top.

6. Mess Hall

This prefab shelter houses the camp's makeshift mess hall. Two guards work in the kitchens preparing meals for their comrades and nutrient loaves they toss over the fence to slaves just before they begin their shift in the mines. The mess hall proper contains rows of tables and benches made from discarded supply crates. At any given time, 1d4 Klatoolian sentries lounge around here taking their meal.

7. Storage

Crates, canisters, and barrels fill much of this shelter, with a narrow path winding its way down the center. Most containers hold food supplies, but several have power packs and energy cells, a few tool kits, and spare mining tools (simple picks, pry bars, shovels, baskets, and buckets). Use the table below if the heroes wish to search the storage area. Heroes who inspect a box at random roll a d6 on the table below. Heroes who are searching for a specific item make a Search check, with the DC determined by the item they seek.

SUPPLIES		
1d6	Supply Sought	Search DC to Find
1-2	Mining tools	5
3	Food	5
4	3d6 Power packs	10
5	2d10 Energy Cells	10
6	1d4 Medpacs	15

8. Barracks

Two rows of bunk beds provide meager quarters for the facility guards. In the back is a portable refresher, while a clearing up front offers a simple lounge for off-duty sentries. At any given time, 1d4 Klatoolian soldiers snooze on their bunks.

Peace on Leritor

If the heroes defeat the slavers and free the prisoners, they still must present the evidence to both colonists and Sauvax, resolving the current animosity and suspicion while restoring amiable relations between the two. This might entail additional diplomatic visits to harvesters and Sauvax kuu-van, with the requisite interaction and potential for breaching cultural protocol. Both seem eager to go about their exis-

tence, though with more care about outside interference and potential for inter-species misunderstandings.

The heroes' involvement in matters on Leritor doesn't have to end there—destruction of the slavers and their excavation camp leaves many loose ends for the heroes to settle.

Recovering the Bracers: Assuming Rynalla didn't retrieve the Bracers of Najus before the heroes destroyed her operation, the heroes could explore the ancient starship wreck themselves. The slaves have only a vague idea what they were seeking, and they have no idea of the latent power of these artifacts. The heroes might descend into the ship, exploring its corridors and berths, looking for the bracers and clues about the vessel's origins, her passengers, and its mission in service to the Sith. Once they retrieve the bracers they must decide whether to hand them over to the settlers, the Sauvax, or other interested parties—or keep them for their own purposes.

Suspicious Clan: One Sauvax clan with a village farther down the coast expresses skepticism that the heroes rooted out the true source of the raiders. They maintain that the settlers manufactured the entire crisis and secretly worked with the slavers to oppress the Sauvax. The heroes must undertake a diplomatic mission to defuse the situation. The clan, however, wishes to use its dissatisfaction to forge a trade alliance with the colonists (or separately with the heroes) to gain access to more

The Bracers of Najus


Rynalla hopes to find a pair of ancient Sith artifacts, the Bracers of Najus. Although the ornately carved bracers now sit buried in the muddy debris of the downed starship wreck, they still retain their awesome dark side powers. The Sith artisan Najus crafted them to aid his ancient vendetta against Jedi, though they possess unanticipated side effects to discourage anyone from using them against the Sith.

The bracers double the number of bonus dice a Jedi rolls when calling upon the dark side against a target allied with the light side of the Force. This bonus applies any time the wearer uses a Force Point to call on the dark side against a force-sensitive opponent who has no Dark Side Points. The bracers give the wearer no beneficial effect when confronting anyone who has at least one Dark Side Point—in fact, should the wearer's adversary use the dark side against him, the opponent gets the bonus!

The bracers rest buried in the silt in one of the starship wreck's deepest, submerged chambers. Rynalla's slaves might recover it in another two months of intense labor. If the heroes learn of the bracers' existence (from Rynalla's computer records in the excavation office or from her very lips), they might undertake the challenge of exploring the vessel and braving its underwater chambers and deteriorated superstructure—an entire adventure in itself.

technology to economically or militarily rise above neighboring clans.

Starship Origins: The heroes investigate the origins of the downed starship, following clues from within the wrecked vessel as well as legends among the Sauvax of an ancient calamity, a city falling from the sky, and god-like emissaries who tried to dominate them. Their inquest leads them from Leritor to the University of Sanbra to examine Rynalla's past research and uncover several promising leads on Sith lore. These clues lead them to the ruins of a long-forgotten Sith stronghold filled with traps, dormant guardians, powerful dark-side energy, and a wicked legacy that might consume one of the heroes.

Vengeful Conspirators: Rynalla wasn't alone in seeking the Bracers of Najus. Her co-conspirators, sinister sponsors, or competitors assume the heroes have taken possession of the bracers and plan to use them for their own ends. One or all of these parties seek vengeance against them, attempting to buy back or steal the Sith artifacts and eliminate anyone who knows about them . . . particularly the heroes. They might attempt to approach the heroes while they wrap up their affairs on Leritor, or they could follow their exploits to ambush them later. 

Profes Rynalla: Female Human Noble 3/Force Adept 5, Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 17 (+5 class, +2 Dex), Spd 10m, VP/WP 44/12; Atk +5 melee (1d3, punch) or +7 ranged (3d6, blaster pistol); SQ Favor +2, bonus class skill (Intimidate), inspire confidence, resource access, force weapon +1d8; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +9; SZ M, FP 2; DSP B, Rep +2; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 17. Challenge Code: D.

Equipment: Blaster pistol, comlink, datapad.

Skills: Appraise +9, Bluff +6, Computer Use +9, Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +5,

Gather Information +7, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (galactic history) +10, Knowledge (Jedi lore) +9, Knowledge (Sith lore) +10, Profession (archeologist) +9, Read/Write Basic, Speak Basic, Speak Huttese, Speak Ryl, Speak Shyriiwook, Spot +6.

Force Skills: Affect Mind +9, Drain Energy +3, Enhance Ability +7, Fear +4, Force Grip +15,

Force Lightning +15, Force Strike +15, Heal Another +2, Heal Self +2, Move Object +10.

Feats: Force-Sensitive, Frightful Presence, Improved Initiative, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, primitive weapons, simple weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Burst of Speed, Control, Dissipate Energy, Sense.



DICE, CAMERA, ACTION!

The Big Twist

BY ROBIN D. LAWS

Once again we're looking into the screenwriter's tool bag for useful techniques we can percolate as we create *Star Wars* adventures. So far we've examined the usefulness of structure and seen how the opening of a story can proceed from the interaction between the heroes' goals and a McGuffin. A McGuffin, you'll recall, is something, usually an object or person, that the characters search for, providing an impetus for the plot.

Opening Act

Now that you've created a McGuffin, it's time to sketch out our plans for a first act—a series of scenes that takes the heroes from their first encounter with the McGuffin to a big twist that will shake them up and change the story's direction.

In a movie that follows the three-act structure, the first act is usually about twenty minutes to half an hour long. Fortunately, in a roleplaying game, you don't face

organize your thoughts. Structure should serve you, not the other way around.

A screenplay or roleplaying scenario is built from scenes. We could spend all day defining what a scene is, but let's just say it's a chunk of story that takes place in a single location and in continuous time. That is, whenever you jump in time or move from one major location to another, you've made a transition from one scene to another. (Don't get bogged down in definitional quibbling here. A running blaster fight makes for a single scene, even if the characters run out of a prison unit, down a corridor, and onto a launching pad. You can probably intuitively feel what makes up a scene better than you can define it.)

In an adventure story, almost all scenes revolve around obstacles. An obstacle is a problem the heroes must overcome in order to get closer to their ultimate goal. During the first act, the heroes are trying either to get the McGuffin or to protect it from hos-

tile forces. (They might eventually find that the McGuffin only led them to another, more crucial goal, but—even if so—that won't happen yet.)

different nature, depending on success and failure, or it might just be tougher if the heroes fail and easier if they succeed.

In a movie, heroes succeed and fail as part of a pattern of rising and falling emotion. If the heroes failed all the time, we, the audience, would start to feel cheated. But if they never failed at all, the story would lose its sense of urgency and suspense. The occasional failure makes eventual victory all the sweeter. For example, during the climax of *Return of the Jedi*, Leia, Han, and the droids face many setbacks before they finally disable the shield generator. If they succeeded right off the bat, we wouldn't feel nearly the sense of elation at their victory. Likewise, games would be no fun if the heroes either always lost or always won. The difference is that the pattern of success and failure arises spontaneously from player decisions and the results of die rolls.

This means that as you develop your opening act, you can't predict which of its obstacles the heroes will overcome. You'll need to develop several potential paths through the story. Some scenes will actually occur; others won't.

Let's say that our McGuffin is Professor Etha Naru. Our heroes have learned from a spy within the Imperial Guard that she's stumbled across a way to mass-manufacture lightsabers that any stormtrooper can use. Their ultimate goal is to stop her.

In the first scene, the heroes need to learn about the McGuffin, so our obstacle revolves around that. The heroes must rendezvous with the spy without being seen by Imperial agents. If they fail, they're seen, and a shoot-out ensues. If they succeed, they move on to a space station, where, the spy says, Etha Naru is due to attend a secret conference of Imperial scientists.

(The flow chart shows how the obstacles in the above example relate to each other. It's here only to explain the concept to you. For your own use, you'll find it much easier to work with a simple point form list.)

In an adventure story, almost all scenes revolve around obstacles.

the same kinds of pacing pressures that filmmakers have to deal with. Players actually want a slower pace in a roleplaying game than they'd expect from a movie. They want time to understand what's going on and to formulate plans before acting. So it's never necessary, or even worthwhile, to try to force the story to adhere to any set timeline. Players tend to find interesting tangents GMs don't plan for. By exploring background details or interacting with minor characters, one group might stretch out your first act to last for an entire four hour session, while another could breeze efficiently through the same sections of your adventure notes in an hour or less. Always remember that, in a roleplaying game, structure is only a device to help you

tile forces. (They might eventually find that the McGuffin only led them to another, more crucial goal, but—even if so—that won't happen yet.)

If they fail to overcome an obstacle, their chances of getting the McGuffin seem to shrink. Their failure moves them to another obstacle; if they overcome that, they get back on track.

If the group succeeds, they seem to move closer to their goal. They move confidently on to the next obstacle.

Do, or Do Not

Yes, you've figured out the dark secret of adventure writing: Whether the heroes succeed or fail, they move on to a new obstacle anyway. That new obstacle might be of a



You may designate certain obstacles as "must pass" obstacles; the story can't move forward until the heroes deal with them. Only do this for scenes where the heroes can believably keep trying until they succeed; otherwise you're building a possible dead end into your structure. If the heroes find a dead end despite your efforts, you can always have them rescued or something. Solutions like that feel unsatisfying, except where they lead to further obstacles, where the heroes can redeem their previous failure.

It's All in the Timing

We want the first act to last for about three or four scenes, even for a group that manages to succeed at every turn. When the shortest possible path in the adventure is three to four scenes long, we prepare for a big change-up, or twist.

In this scene, a dramatic shift occurs, ending the first act and kicking off the second. In an adventure movie, the heroes often discover new information forcing them to change tactics. In many instances, the twist motivates the heroes to travel physically from one location to another. The emotional tone usually shifts, too; the new development is most likely grim, one in which the heroes learn that their situation is even worse, and the stakes much higher, than they thought.

The archetypal example of a big twist occurs in *Star Wars*, when our heroes arrive at Alderaan only to discover that 1) the planet has been blasted to rubble, 2) the Empire has a gigantic space station, and 3) the success of their mission now depends on boarding the thing. What seemed like a simple courier mission has now turned into something much more dangerous. Take note of the way this plot twist piles on the revelations. Whenever possible, try to do the same, creating a big twist bearing multiple discoveries.

As we've said before and will say again, the so-called rules of structure are meant to be broken, especially in the unpredictable, fast-and-loose atmosphere of a roleplaying session. Sometimes it's perfectly acceptable to simply shift the action or location in a big way. *Return of the Jedi's* first act, the rescue of Han from Jabba the Hutt, stands alone as

an exciting action interlude. When our heroes finish off this secondary villain, the second act begins, and we return to the trilogy's main storyline, as Luke heads back to Dagobah for his last encounter with Yoda.

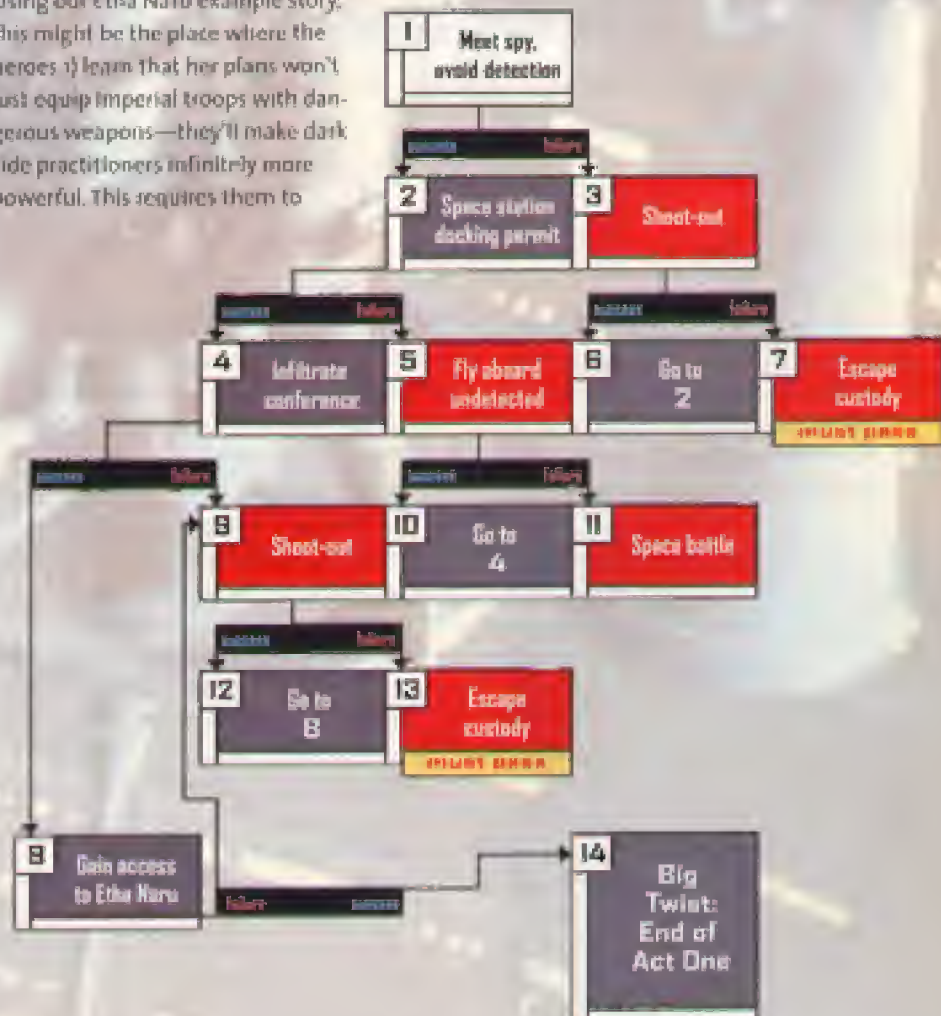
The next time you go to a movie, try to keep an eye out for the act break. For that matter, we'll leave it to you to pop your video copies of *The Empire Strikes Back* and *The Phantom Menace* into the machine to find their act breaks.

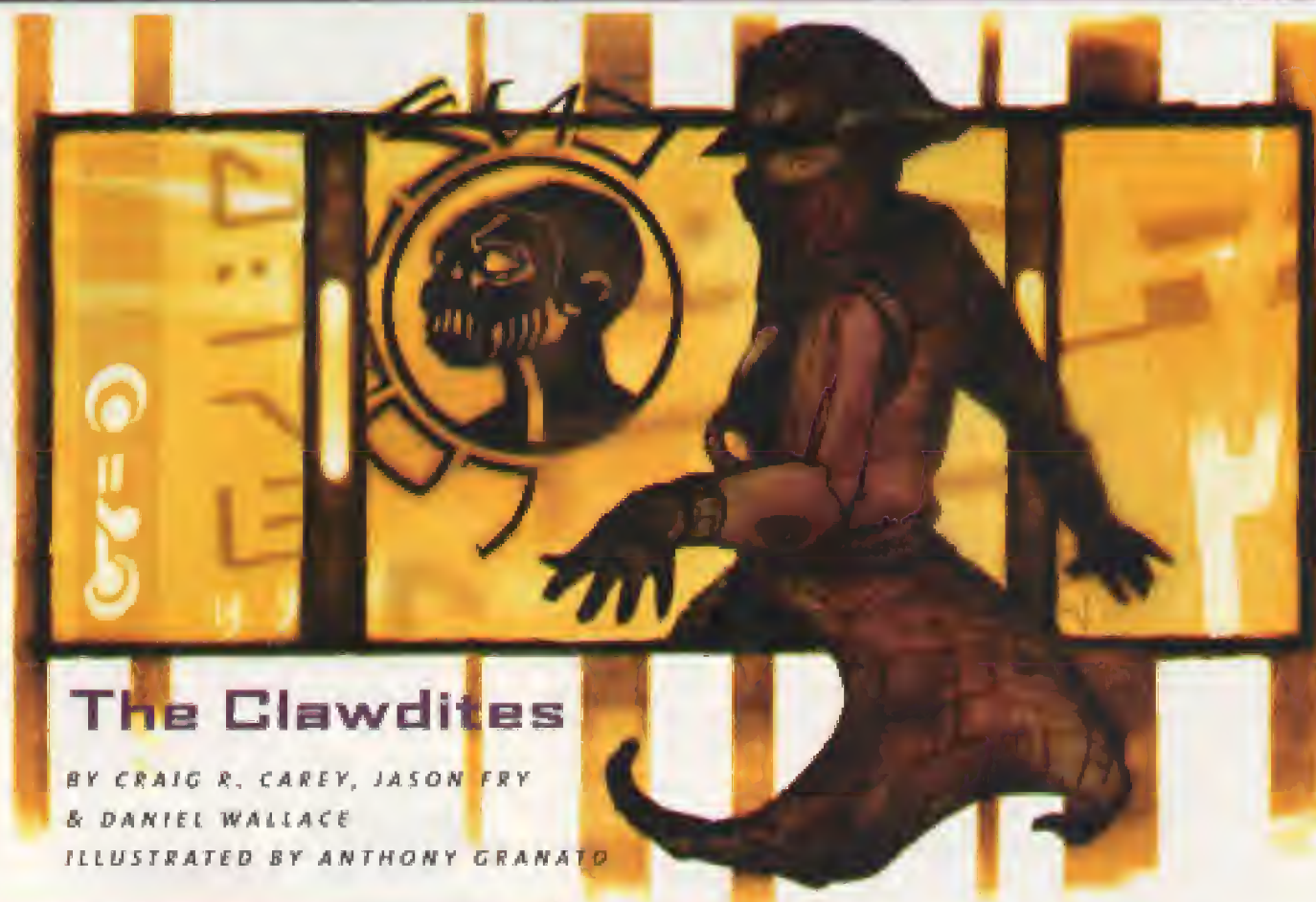
Making the Big Twist

To create big twists for your own adventures, answer as many of these questions as you can:

1. What major discovery do the heroes make?
2. What big location change does it lead to?
3. How does it make the heroes' task harder?
4. How does it make the story darker or more serious?

Using our Etha Nari example story, this might be the place where the heroes 1) learn that her plans won't just equip Imperial troops with dangerous weapons—they'll make dark side practitioners infinitely more powerful. This requires them to





The Clawdites

BY CRAIG R. CAREY, JASON FRY
& DANIEL WALLACE

ILLUSTRATED BY ANTHONY GRANATO

From the Desk of Professor Eliss

I have never told the full story of how I escaped the Emperor's thugs and fled Sanbra to a temporary life in exile on Krithemomen III. Until the signing of the peace accords between the Empire and the New Republic, I never felt safe enough to tell it. Were it not for Professor Mankuskett and his mysterious friend, I would surely have been caught by an Imperial death squad and shot through the brainpan for failing to promote the lie of human superiority.

Mankuskett and a comrade had accompanied me away from campus to the quiet landing pads south of the Shoopy Hostel. At the outskirts, however, a squad of COMPNOR officers blocked the roadway, their lummas shining in our faces. My hearts sinking, I swiveled my eyestalks toward my companions and nearly cried out when I discovered that

Mankuskett's friend had vanished. Where a slender Nikto had been just moments ago stood a fresh-faced human man wearing the green uniform and bristle-cut of an Intelligence recruit.

"Two dissidents," he said, nodding toward Mankuskett and me. "Shuttling them to the Vallant for questioning."

As we cleared the roadblock and reached the safety of our own ship, I remembered one of the many titles Mankuskett held at Sanbra—Chair of the Council on Metagrowth and Polymorphism. I never found out whether my benefactor was, in fact, a Clawdite, but the fact remains that I owe the last twenty-five years of my life to a changeling's quick thinking.

—Tern Eliss

Appearance

Clawdites are a genetic variant of a humanoid species originating on the Mid Rim planet of Zolan. Biologists from Sanbra University have identified eleven shape-shifting species in the civilized galaxy—from the Polydroxol to the Shik'ido—but unlike these specimens the Clawdites cannot alter the physical configuration of their bodies. Their abilities are limited to changing the texture and coloration of their skin.

Many animals on Zolan have a similar ability. The spotted monzu can flash its back in pulsating rainbow patterns, and the herabe can become as lumpy as the desert rocks in which it hunts. The Zolanders exhibited no special camouflage ability, but early Zolan scientists postulated that the genes for skin-changing lay dormant within their chromosomal structure. A hundred generations ago, researchers proved the theory correct when gene therapy saved a population of ailing Zolanders from solar



burns, inadvertently unlocking their powers of surface morphing. This event marked the birth of the Clawdites, though it was centuries before they earned recognition as a distinct social entity.

In their natural state, Clawdites are indistinguishable from other Zolanders, except under genetic examination. Their skin-changing abilities vary from individual to individual and can be improved with practice. The change is excruciating—the Clawdite stage actor Suzdice likened it to “a million needles stabbing out from the inside.” Some Clawdites go their entire lives without developing their skill at mimicry.

The few Clawdites who practice the art of skin-changing have learned to shunt aside the agony of bubbling and twisting their skin into unnatural configurations, but even the best cannot sustain a full disguise for more than a few minutes. Some say that a handful of disciplined Clawdites can maintain a shifted state indefinitely and that this abuse of their bodies has liquefied their

insides. Such tales, however, remain unsubstantiated.

The gift of skin-changing comes with a downside, as Clawdites are physically weaker than normal Zolanders and must treat their skin with special oils to prevent splitting. A talented skin-changer can assume the appearance of any humanoid alien species, though the Clawdite epidermis cannot duplicate the features of a specific individual on demand. The wrinkled skin of a Weequay is an easy match, but no Clawdite can generate the extra flesh needed to create an Ewokian hammerhead. Clothes and jewelry can also be mimicked, provided they lie close to the skin.

History

A hundred generations ago, a meteorite unleashed a skin-eating contagion on the population of Zolan, leaving the afflicted with no natural protection against solar radiation. Wrapped in oozing bandages, thousands of sick Zolanders relocated to the

unpopulated Sultur continent. Medical scientists visited the quarantined colony to test new strains of gene-therapy, and their success at regenerating skin cells also allowed the treated patients to control the appearance of their skin. Dubbed skin-changers, the survivors passed this trait on to their descendants, and within a century “Clawdites” had established a robust community on Sultur.

Rejoining society, however, wasn’t so simple. Zolander religion had long preached against those “who do not show their true face,” and those Clawdites who immigrated to other continents were forced to wear colored scarves identifying them as skin-changers. Most Zolander merchants refused to do business with anyone displaying “deception colors.” Clawdites who refused to wear the scarves were remanded to secured ghettos on the false pretense that they carried disease.

As the Clawdite population grew, it flexed what little political power it had,

Species Summary

A rare sight in the galaxy, Clawdites can camouflage themselves by changing the color and texture of their skin. They are resentful of Zolan’s other humanoid species for centuries of institutional persecution.

Personality: Clawdites are quiet loners who avoid others except when it serves to advance their own agendas.

Physical Descriptions: In their natural state, adult Clawdites are humanoid aliens averaging between 1.5 and 1.9 meters.

Homeworld: Zolan.

Languages: Clawdite and Basic.

Example Names: Renneyn, Annatowa, Suzdice.

Adventurers: Clawdite adventurers can be members of any class, though their outsider natures are best suited for fringer, scoundrel, or bounty hunter classes. A Clawdite Jedi is possible but unlikely.

CLAWDITE SPECIES TRAITS

- **–2 Str.** The genetic tweaks that turned Clawdites into skin-changers made them weaker than most humanoid species.
- **Medium-sized.** As Medium-sized creatures, Clawdites suffer no size penalties.
- **Clawdite base speed is 10 meters.**
- **Skin-changer.** Clawdites are naturally able to change the shape, texture, and coloration of their skin via muscular micro-contraction and autonomic biochemical processes. This allows a Clawdite to change her appearance to mimic that of another Medium-sized humanoid species, though not specific individuals. The transformation grants the Clawdite no special qualities of the mimicked species. It does not include the ability to

generate extra limbs, wings, or other appendages; Clawdites can assume only strictly humanoid forms. The Clawdite can even mimic tight-fitting clothing, provided she isn’t already wearing something that would obscure the illusion.

The transformation changes the Clawdite’s entire body and requires a full-round action. It is also quite painful. Whenever a Clawdite uses this ability to appear as any species other than Clawdite, she suffers 1d4 points of damage per round—a Fortitude save (DC 12) reduces this damage by one-half. A Clawdite can reduce the transformation time to a move action, but this raises the difficulty for the initial transformation to DC 18. The skin-changer reverts to her natural form if she is stunned, fatigued, exhausted, unconscious, dying, or dead. Few Clawdites develop this natural talent into a true discipline—the process is long and excruciating—except perhaps those who earn their livings through performance or more sinister vocations. See the new feat, *Shapeshifter*, for more information.

- **Automatic Languages:** Clawdite and Basic.

Clawdite Common: Init +0; Defense 10; Spd 10m; VP/WP —/10; Atk +0 melee (1d3–1, unarmed) or +0 ranged; SQ Skin-changer; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; SZ M; FP 0; Rep 0; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10, Challenge Code A.

Skills: Craft (any one) +2 or Profession (any one) +2, Knowledge (any one) +2, Read/Write Clawdite, Speak Basic, Speak Clawdite.

The Clawdites

causing diplomatic headaches for the rest of Zolan. Eventually the Clawdites approached Count Dooku and the Confederacy of Independent Systems, hoping to arm themselves for possible civil war. The rise of the Empire put such thoughts on hold, as Imperial intelligence blockaded the Zolan system to prevent any skin-changing Clawdites from aiding the Rebellion.

After the Battle of Endor, the simmering planetary feud came to a head once more, prompting the New Republic to intercede and attempt to establish a peace; but the assassination of the New Republic's chief negotiator triggered a full-scale war. The Clawdite vaporizer Renneyn spearheaded the assaults that led to Clawdite control over three-quarters of the planet, including Zolan's capital.

Society

Isolated on the Sultur continent, the early Clawdites developed a distinct culture and language. Clawdites tend to not follow the religion of their Zolander brothers and instead are passionately secular, viewing the universe with a kind of detached pragmatism. The oppression they experienced at the hands of the Zolandars did little to unite them, and most Clawdites are quite willing to betray their fellow skin-changers.

The one major event in which Clawdites joined together to achieve a great goal was the war against the Zolandars, and that was little more than an accident of timing. For the most part, Clawdite society is an orderly anarchy, with local warriors known as vaporizers attracting followers to a multitude of banners. In the New Republic era, the myriad vaporizers independently arrived at the conclusion that revolution was suddenly possible; once New Republic negotiations fell apart, the most powerful vaporizers launched assaults that created a permanent shift in the balance of power. The vaporizer Renneyn captured Zolan's capital city. Renneyn, while not technically the leader of the Clawdites, holds the most political influence in the current era.

Clawdites have also struggled against the peculiarities of their own planet. Due to the polarity of Zolan's magnetic field, repulsorlifts cannot operate anywhere on the

Clawdite homeworld. Landspeeders are useless; ships that make the mistake of trying to land on Zolan drop like stones. An X-wing could conceivably glide down on its airfoil surfaces, but anything less aerodynamic (a TIE fighter or a YT-1300 freighter, for example) is guaranteed to crash.

Obviously, Zolan has a perennial problem attracting interstellar commerce. To address this obstacle, the Zolandars and Clawdites constructed an enormous space station where visiting ships can dock; anyone wishing to go planetside must then book passage on a Zolander orbital glider. These craft get back into orbit by way of messy rocket boosters, which spew clouds of smoke as they roar out of the planet's gravity well.

Centuries of round-the-clock rocket launches have polluted Zolan's atmosphere so much that the planet exists in perpetual twilight. From mid-morning through mid-afternoon the sky is dim and hazy; in Zolan's capital city, true night begins at three o'clock local time, when only the searing flares of rocket trails break the darkness.

New Feat: Shapechanger

You have developed your natural talent for biophysical transformation to a much greater degree than others of your kind.

Prerequisite: Only Clawdites (and other natural skin-changers) may take this feat.

Benefit: In addition to being able to control the shape, texture, and coloration of your skin, you can alter the length, shape, texture, and coloration of your hair, and even the coloration of your eyes. You can also choose to alter only specific portions of your body. You gain a +8 bonus on all Disguise checks while using this ability, and you do not suffer the usual -2 penalty for disguising yourself as a member of a different species, provided the species in question is humanoid.

Special: When you first transform, and after each minute during which you are transformed, you suffer 1d4 points of damage. This takes the place of any other damage you would normally suffer from your skin-changer ability. A Fortitude save (DC 12) reduces this damage by one-half.

Because this phenomenon is so recent in evolutionary terms—beginning less than thirteen centuries ago—none of Zolan's inhabitants have developed low-light vision. The ubiquitous smog cleared somewhat during the years of Imperial interdiction but returned to its former levels with the arrival of New Republic commerce. ■

Eras of Play



During the Rise of the Empire era, the Clawdites opened negotiations with Count Dooku's separatists hoping to gain independence from the Zolandars. Zam Wesell, a Clawdite bounty hunter and assassin, increased the notoriety of the species with her high-profile hits.



The Empire squashed the Clawdites' hopes of independence by blockading Zolan. The few Clawdites who made it offworld exploited their skill at disguise by taking jobs as spies and thieves. It's unknown if any Clawdites joined the Alliance, but the Rebels did employ them from time to time as freelance agents.



After the fall of the Empire, New Republic diplomats came to Zolan to mediate a settlement between the Clawdites and the Zolandars. The experiment went down in flames when a Zolander rabble-rouser killed the chief negotiator, triggering a planet-wide war that left the Clawdites in control of three-quarters of Zolan's continental landmass.



The Yuuzhan Vong, rapacious as they are, cannot be everywhere at once. So far they have spared Zolan from their military onslaught. Major Showalter of New Republic Intelligence has paid handsomely to recruit over a hundred Clawdites into Guile Company, a newly formed enemy infiltration force. While Showalter's Clawdite agents can duplicate the outward appearance of Yuuzhan Vong warriors, their inexperience with Vong culture has led to a high fatality rate among Guile Company's ranks.



Clawdite Assassin

BY JD WIKER

Zam Wesell is something of a heretic in the eyes of the average Clawdite. Although Clawdites have strong religious convictions against harming others for profit, Zam prefers to think of herself as "progressive." Much of her revenue as a bounty hunter goes toward funding other radical-thinking Clawdites on Zolan—and Zam makes a great deal of money. She most often appears as a human female.


Zam frequently questioned her people's self-imposed religious restrictions—and how those who rejected them were remanded to the status of third-class citizens. Zam decided she would neither limit herself nor live in a slum. She allied herself with the Mabari, an ancient order of Zolan warrior knights. She learned to fight, achieving the third level of Mabari mastery. Zam also developed her natural talent for shapeshifting until she could pass as a member of nearly any other species almost indefinitely. She disguised herself as a human businesswoman and fled Zolan for Denon, a city-planet second only to Coruscant to hone her less noble skills.

The Separatist movement has provided Zam with a pretty constant income. She doesn't much care which "side" she works for, and both Separatists and militant loyalists are willing to pay good money to keep each other in check.

Zam Wesell: Female Clawdite, Soldier 3/Scoundrel 5/Bounty Hunter 3; Init +2 (Dex); Def 20 (+8 class, +2 Dex); Spd 10in; VP/WP 66/13; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d3, punch) or +11/+6 ranged (2d8, slugthrower rifle) or +11/+6 ranged (3d6 blaster pistol); SQ Skin-changer, Illicit barter, lucky (1/game session), precise attack +1, target bonus +2, sneak attack +4d6, DR 3; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +5; SZ M; FP 3; DSP 4; Rep +8; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 12; Challenge Code: E.

Equipment: Slugthrower rifle, blaster pistol, vibrodagger, stun cuffs, combat jumpsuit (with integrated breath mask), blast helmet (with integrated encrypted comlink), ASN-121 assassin droid (with remote control), alrspeeder, 2 power packs, security kit, ancient Mabari emblem.

Skills: Bluff +5, Climb +4, Computer Use +5, Disguise +15, Entertain (acting) +3, Gather Information +9, Hide +8, Knowledge (alien species) +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Pilot +13, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Clawdite, Repair +2, Sense Motive +5, Speak Basic, Speak Clawdite, Spot +7, Survival +7, Tumble +7.

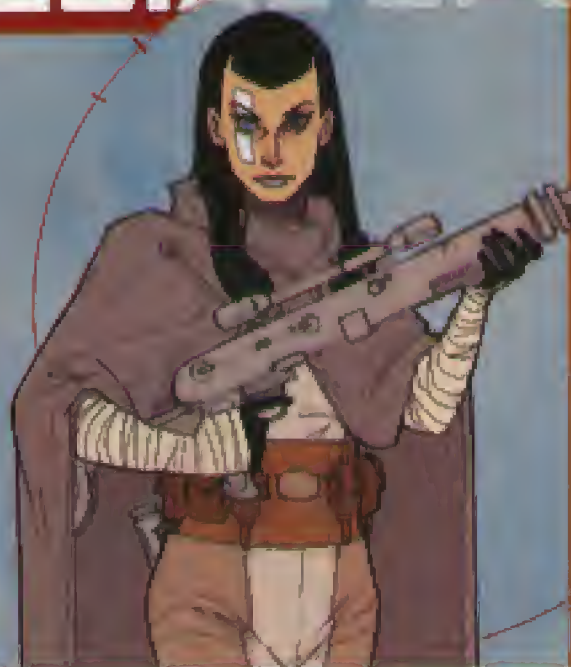
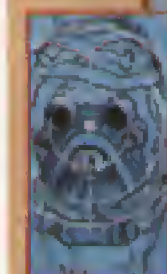
Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Far Shot, Minic, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Shapeshifter, Skill Emphasis (Pilot), Track, Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, blaster rifles, heavy weapons, simple weapons, slugthrowers, vibroweapons). 



The Sharpshooter

BY GARY M. SARLI

ILLUSTRATION BY PHIL NOTO



The sharpshooter is the master of long-range combat, preferring to engage his enemies from hundreds of meters away. Stealth is his greatest asset, the ability to strike a target without warning and with uncanny accuracy. His patience, control, and cunning make him one of the most feared opponents in the galaxy.

Many sharpshooters are members of military organizations. They often operate with a spotter, infiltrating deep into enemy territory and eliminating high-profile targets, sowing confusion and fear in the ranks of the opposition. Sometimes, sharpshooter teams are attached to other military units. One of the most famous sharpshooters in the New Republic was Myn Donks, a former member of the Corellian militia who earned his bloodstreaks as a sniper. His shooting and flying skill prompted Wedge Antilles to recruit him as a member of Wraith Squadron, the New Republic Special Forces group that was instrumental in defeating Warlord Zsinj.

Not all sharpshooters serve in the military, however. On many urbanized worlds, local security forces train sharpshooters as part of crisis response teams. Similarly, sharpshooters are often included in the security forces that protect important political figures. Many sharpshooters are sportsmen or hunters, using their exceptional skill to track

and kill the most dangerous of wild beasts. And, of course, there are assassins, selling their deadly services to the highest bidder.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a sharpshooter, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Hide 5 ranks, Spot 5 ranks

Feats: Far Shot, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Class Features

The sharpshooter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Craft (any) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (any) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Repair (Int), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Additional Level:

4 + Int modifier

Vitality: +6 per level

Special Abilities

The sharpshooter gains the following special abilities:

Preferred Weapon: At 1st, 5th, and 9th level, the sharpshooter gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls with a single ranged weapon of his choice. Choose one weapon with which the

sharpshooter is proficient. Each time this ability is gained, it may be applied to the same weapon (the effects stack) or to a different weapon. This ability stacks with the Weapon Focus feat, as well as any other bonuses that increase the sharpshooter's ranged attack bonus with the preferred weapon.

Ranged Sneak Attack: Beginning at 2nd level, if an opponent is unable to defend herself effectively from the attack, the sharpshooter can strike a vital spot for extra damage. Any time the sharpshooter's target would be denied her Dexterity bonus to Defense (regardless of whether she has a Dexterity bonus) and the sharpshooter suffers no range penalties, his ranged attacks deal +1d6 damage. At 6th level, this bonus improves to +2d6. At 10th level, it improves to +3d6.

This ability is not cumulative with sneak attack bonus dice earned by gaining levels in other classes.

Follow Target: At 3rd level, the sharpshooter becomes adept at keeping his weapon trained on a moving target. If the sharpshooter has made a successful ranged touch attack against a moving target, there's a chance he can retain the benefits of aiming (see sidebar). Each round the target moves, the sharpshooter can attempt a Reflex save (DC = distance moved in meters) to stay locked on the target.



Improved Range: At 4th level, the sharpshooter has become so familiar with his preferred weapons that he can greatly extend their range. When using a preferred weapon, treat its range increment as if it was double its listed value. At 8th level, the sharpshooter treats the range increment for a preferred weapon as if it were $2.5 \times$ the

listed value. Improved range replaces the effects of the Far Shot feat when using a preferred weapon.

Deadly Aim: Beginning at 7th level, the sharpshooter can use a preferred weapon to deliver a coup de grace to a helpless foe even at long range as a full-round action. To use deadly aim, the sharpshooter must

suffer no range penalties against the target and make a normal ranged attack roll. Because the target is helpless, ranged sneak attack damage also applies. See Chapter 8: Combat of the core rulebook for information on coup de grace attacks. **S**

New Equipment: Targeting Scope

Cost: rating \times rating \times rating \times 50 credits

Weight: rating \times rating \times 0.1 kg

Targeting scopes are similar to macrobinoculars and electrobinoculars in form and function. They allow the user to see over great distances and sometimes enhance what the user sees. A targeting scope can reduce range penalties but requires great concentration and can make the user vulnerable to attacks.

Each individual scope has a rating of 1 or more. Targeting scopes reduce the range penalty for Spot checks to -1 for every [4 meters \times rating] (instead of -1 every 4 meters). Scopes can also be outfitted with low-light vision, darkvision, or blindsight for an additional cost. Treat these as scopes of 1, 2, or 4 ratings higher, respectively, for cost and weight only. Scopes that cost more than 5,000 credits are considered military hardware.

Using a scope mounted on a readied weapon is a free action that can provoke an attack of opportunity. When you use a scope, you lose all Dodge and Dexterity bonuses to Defense until your next action. You cannot use a scope in the same round that you move, except for a 2-meter adjust. In exchange, divide the distance to the target by the scope's rating before applying a range penalty.

A targeting scope does not extend the maximum range of a weapon. Weapons are limited to a maximum range of $10 \times$ range increment. Feats such as Far Shot and abilities such as improved range are included when calculating a weapon's maximum range.

Optional Rule: Aiming

As a full-round action, you can try to zero in on a target using a blaster pistol, blaster rifle, slugthrower, or a primitive, simple, or exotic weapon that fires a projectile in a straight line. Aiming can deny a target its Dexterity bonus to Defense and reduce range penalties. You cannot aim with a thrown weapon.

Aiming requires a ranged touch attack, can provoke an attack of opportunity, and causes you to lose all Dodge and Dexterity bonuses to Defense for one round. If the attack is successful, the target is denied its Dexterity bonus to Defense (even if it has none) for your next single attack with this weapon. If the target moves more than 2 meters between the time you make the ranged touch attack and your next single attack, you gain no benefits from aiming.

The following modifiers apply only to the next single attack that follows a successful aim action:

Position: A lower center of gravity both stabilizes the weapon and reduces recoil. Kneeling decreases the range penalty of the attack by 1. Lying prone decreases the range penalty by 2. For instance, a -2 range penalty becomes $+0$ when the shooter is prone and is effectively no penalty.

Support: Support holds the weapon steady, reducing variations from minute muscle movements. Improvised support (a vehicle, crate, tree, or wall) decreases the range penalty of the attack by 1. Good support (a bipod, tripod, or sandbag) decreases the range penalty by 2. Preparing support is a move action that can provoke an attack of opportunity.

Only slugthrowers, blaster pistols, blaster rifles, and similar exotic weapons gain a benefit from position and support. Reduction of range penalties from position and support stack.

The Sharpshooter

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Reflex Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+0	+1	+2	Preferred weapon	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+1	+2	+3	Ranged sneak attack +1d6	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+1	+2	+3	Follow target (if using optional Aiming rule)	+1	+1
4th	+3	+1	+2	+4	Improved range ($\times 2$)	+1	+1
5th	+3	+2	+3	+4	Preferred weapon	+2	+1
6th	+4	+2	+3	+5	Ranged sneak attack +2d6	+2	+1
7th	+5	+3	+4	+5	Deadly aim	+3	+2
8th	+6	+3	+4	+6	Improved range ($\times 2.5$)	+3	+2
9th	+6	+3	+4	+6	Preferred weapon	+3	+2
10th	+7	+4	+5	+7	Ranged sneak attack +3d6	+4	+2



The Medic

BY GARY M. SARLI

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM FOWLER

The *Star Wars* galaxy is a dangerous place, where even brief bouts of combat can turn deadly in seconds. From lightsabers to blaster bolts, there are countless ways a being can get crushed, maimed, burned, sliced, or blasted. In those dire times, the skills of a talented healer become the most needed. While doctors, surgeons, and specialists use clean facilities and bulky bacta tanks, the medic is the hero in the field who can patch up your wounds and send you back into the fray in a matter of moments.

Medics are doctors or surgeons who perform their practice in and around combat zones. They almost always have some sort of military training, even if it is only a small amount, and they can fend for themselves when the blaster bolts start flying. Although their focus is on the healing arts, they require basic weapons and armor training to survive amid such imminent danger, and most spend enough time fighting for their lives that they become quite good at it. No stranger to the grisly aftermath of warfare, the medic remains collected and in control even in the most intense situations.

Medics are both disciplined and well educated. Their medical training is equal to that of most emergency staff, and sometimes their experiences lead them to new and unorthodox methods of treatment. Medics take their work seriously, but with a touch of pragmatism that tends to give them a more hard-edged outlook. Medics tend to be practical, constantly thinking about what can and should be done rather than getting caught up in theoretical situations. Talented, organized, knowledgeable, effective, realistic: All of these terms describe the medic.

Roleplaying Notes

Medics, like most other professions in the galaxy, come in all varieties. They are most commonly found in military and paramilitary organizations, where their field experience and training has a chance to shine. The Rebel Alliance, Galactic Empire, and the Old and New Republics, have some of the most talented medics at their disposal. Smaller organizations like the Corellian Special Forces, Antarian Rangers, Peace Brigade, and Rocket Jumpers, among others, usually have a core group of medics that are dispatched

when the need arises. Whenever armies clash in battle, a strike team invades an enemy complex, or a camp falls prey to a surprise raid, the medics of the armed forces throughout the galaxy are summoned.

In addition to those medics who find themselves as members of different military organizations, there are those who function independently but rely on similar training to patch up the wounded. An independent medic might find himself working for a pirate gang or criminal organization, healing those members who were injured on a previous mission. Others might latch on to a group of smugglers, offering their services in such a dangerous trade in exchange for a cut of the profits. Still others might choose to join an adventuring party because of similar goals or philosophies, lending their abilities to form a better-balanced group.

Whether profit, profession, or ideals motivate the medic, there are limitless options available to medic heroes. There are countless ways a hero can learn about medicine and biology, and nearly as many organizations willing to offer a skilled doc-



for basic arms and equipment training. As such, many different kinds of heroes can be considered medics, each unique in style but with the common goal of saving lives in the heat of combat.

Variant Abilities

Variant 1: Skill Mastery (Treat Injury)

Instead of gaining the Research ability, medics can maintain their poise while in a dangerous situation and administer healing to those who need it. As per the Scout ability, when using the Treat Injury skill, the medic may "take 10" on the roll even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so. He becomes so certain in his skill that he can use it reliably even under adverse conditions.

Variant 2: Courage Under Fire

Instead of gaining the Instant Mastery ability, medics gain the ability to perform emergency aid to injured characters while still maintaining a combative stance. Using the Treat Injury skill to attend to dazed, knocked out, or stunned characters, as well as using a medpac or first aid while in a threatened area, does not provoke an attack of opportunity against the medic.

Variant 3: Ready for Anything

The medic sees a lot of wounds that often turn up only on corpses outside a war zone. Years of training have taught him how best to treat a fresh combat injury. Instead of the Tech Specialty ability, the medic gains a +4 competence bonus to all Treat Injury checks used to treat a character injured ten minutes (100 rounds) ago or less.

New Medical Equipment

BY OWEN K. C. STEPHENS

MEDICAL BACKPACK

Cost: 600 credits

Weight: 5 kg

The medical backpack is designed as an all-purpose emergency medical kit. It includes a standard medical kit, a collapsible repulsorlift stretcher (capable of carrying up to 150 kg of weight), a simple diagnostic scanner, and a medical procedures database. Consulting with the database (which takes a full round action) grants a +2 equipment bonus to Treat Injury checks.

SHOCK CLOTH

Cost: 150 credits

Weight: 1 kg

One of the most important aspects of treating wounds is preventing shock. The Shock Cloth is a special temperature-controlled thermal blanket equipped with hundreds of tiny injectors and a small store of medical chemicals. When attached to a medical scanner, computer, or datapad (not included), it can administer medications as needed to specific parts of a patient's body while stabilizing body temperature.

The Shock Cloth gives a +5 equipment bonus to any Treat Injury check made to stabilize a character. This does not count as a use of a medpac. The Shock Cloth also grants +1 to Fortitude saves to resist cold weather. A Shock Cloth has enough chemicals for 5 treatments before it must be restocked (costing 50 credits).

The Medic

Lvl	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special Abilities	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1	Sol 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	Starting feat, feat	+3	+0
2	Sol 1/Tech 1	+1	+2	+1	+1	Starting feat, Skill Emphasis	+3	+0
3	Sol 1/Tech 2	+2	+2	+1	+1	Research, feat	+4	+0
4	Sol 2/Tech 2	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus feat	+4	+1
5	Sol 2/Tech 3	+4	+3	+1	+2	Instant mastery	+4	+2
6	Sol 2/Tech 4	+5	+4	+2	+2	Tech specialty, feat	+4	+2
7	Sol 3/Tech 4	+6/+1	+4	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+5	+2
8	Sol 3/Tech 5	+6/+1	+4	+3	+3	Expert	+6	+2
9	Sol 3/Tech 6	+7/+2	+5	+4	+4	Feat	+6	+2
10	Sol 4/Tech 6	+8/+3	+6	+4	+4	Bonus feat	+6	+2
11	Sol 4/Tech 7	+9/+4	+6	+4	+4		+7	+3
12	Sol 4/Tech 8	+10/+5	+7	+4	+5	Tech specialty, feat	+7	+3
13	Sol 5/Tech 8	+11/+6/+1	+7	+4	+5		+8	+3
14	Sol 5/Tech 9	+11/+6/+1	+7	+5	+5		+8	+3
15	Sol 5/Tech 10	+12/+7/+2	+8	+5	+5	Expert, feat	+9	+3
16	Sol 6/Tech 10	+13/+8/+3	+9	+6	+6	Bonus feat	+9	+4
17	Sol 6/Tech 11	+14/+9/+4	+9	+7	+7	Tech specialty	+9	+5
18	Sol 6/Tech 12	+15/+10/+5	+10	+7	+7	Feat	+10	+5
19	Sol 7/Tech 12	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+7	+7		+11	+5
20	Sol 7/Tech 13	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+7	+8		+11	+5

CALL SIGNS

BY OWEN K.C. STEPHENS

Names in the *Star Wars* galaxy have a particular feel, and it's often hard for anyone to come up with enough good ones for characters. Though it's clearly impossible to cover naming conventions for every alien species in the *Star Wars* universe, "Call Signs" tries to present some of the more common species. In this installment we look at the names of Kashyyyk, native planet of the Wookiees.

Wookiees have been part of galactic civilization for centuries. They were respected members of the Old Republic, but the Empire reduced these noble giants to a slave species, forcing them into labor camps from whence they were rarely seen again. With the restoration of the New Republic, the Wookiees have once again begun to interact regularly with other species on equal terms.

It might seem that Wookiee names would be restricted to the Wookiees themselves, but this is far from the case. During the Rebellion, the plight of the Wookiees resulted in many Rebels using Wookiee names as code terms or as part of ciphered messages. Members of species who saw the Wookiees as kindred spirits adapted Wookiee names into their own culture, including some Ewoks who see Wookiees as big brothers of sorts. The Republic now makes a great showing of naming monuments, new planets, and military ships after Wookiees in an effort to show they are accepted and desired members of the new civilization.

The Wookiee language (Shyriiwook) is comprised of several specific noises that can be roughly categorized into barks, growls, grumbles, grunts, moans, snarls, and trills. As a result, Wookiee words are next to impossible for non-Wookiees to pronounce properly (though it has been claimed that Ewoks and Yuzzem can at least get close). As a result, a standardized translation technique that replaces Shyriiwook noises with sounds common to Basic has been developed. Though this method is normally used

NAMES OF KASHYYYK



only to transcribe Shyriiwook using the Basic alphabet, it can also be used to translate Wookiee native names into sounds most species can pronounce. Though not technically the correct pronunciations of these names, a Wookiee familiar with Basic recognizes this version of his name and generally answers to it.

To help create Wookiee names for use in roleplaying games or as player names for any of the numerous *Star Wars* computer games, here's a handy Wookiee name generator.

How It Works

Each Wookiee name consists of a prefix (from Table 2) and one or more suffixes (from Table 3). Definitions are included in these tables to help determine what a name means once it has been generated. You can randomly generate a Wookiee name by rolling on Table 1. If you prefer, you can pick a set of definitions you like, then assemble a name that matches them. If your character is a scout who is fond of looking up at the night sky, you might decide his name will mean "Star-Gazer." You name him "Jowova."

If you don't like a particular combination, try adding a, e, y, l, s, sh, or a set of double letters. Although not every combination of prefixes and suffixes will sound right, usually only a minor change does the trick. If you can't make a particular name work, try one with a similar meaning. If you didn't like "Jowova," try "Jowkazza," a name that means "Star-Tracker," instead.

If you randomly generate a name and don't like the way it sounds or its definition, try altering the order of the words. It is also possible to use the definition as a starting place for a name's meaning. Often the definitions can be combined in a poetic way for better results. In the case of a three- or more-syllable name, try dropping one or more of the definitions. Don't worry about two names sharing the same meaning or having two definitions for one name. The set of rules for translating Wookiee names into Basic are fairly good, but they're not perfect. Most Wookiees accept that much of the subtlety of their native tongue is lost when it's rendered in Basic. **E**

Wookiee Names

TABLE 1: RANDOM NAMES

1d10	Result
1-6	Roll once on Table 2 and once on Table 3.
7-9	Roll once on Table 2 and twice on Table 3.
10	Roll once on Table 2 and three times on Table 3.

TABLE 2: PREFIXES

1d5	Word	Meaning
1-3	Arri	Mighty, strong
4-6	Atti	Father/Mother, first
7-9	Bus	Home, life, tree, wroshyr
10-12	Cjir	Ancient, great, wise
13-15	Chal	Hidden, secret, shadow
16-18	Chew	Honored, noble, trusted
19-21	Dew	Fierce, stern, stout
22-24	Dry	Elder, old, wizened
25-27	Fro	Proud, powerful
28-30	Gaar	Brave, bold, fearless
31-33	Geyy	Fat, large, great
34-36	Gia	Peaceful, steady, sure
37-39	Groz	Burning, furious, golden
40-42	Issh	Black, dangerous, dark, deep
43-45	Ji	Beloved, fortunate, lucky
46-48	Jow	Space, star, sun, vast
49-51	Kalla	Angry, mad, wild
52-54	Kat	Moon, night, white
55-57	Kerri	High, tall, tree
58-60	Kil	Defi, nimbly, swift
61-63	Uak	Autumn, blood, red
64-66	Low	Dutiful, honored, proud
67-69	Lof	Clever, cunning, wily
70-72	Maila	Beautiful, green, valued
73-75	Nag	Heroic, legendary, mythic
76-78	Rair	Lake, ocean, river, sea
79-81	Kor	Dark, hidden, marsh, swamp
82-84	Sai	Lightning, run, storm, thunder
85-87	Shor	Deadly, fierce, lethal, shadow
88-90	Sno	Curlous, fast, quick
91-93	Spel	Famed, legend, legendary, mythic, revered
94-96	Tat	Cloud, fog, mist
97-100	Wrrl	Quiet, soft, stealthy

TABLE 3: SUFFIXES

1d5	Word	Meaning
1-3	addik	Guardian, guard, sentinel
4-6	ahab	Keeper, warden
7-9	an	Crafter, craftsman, master
10-12	anka	Judge, leader
13-15	atta	Fur, hide, shield
16-18	bacca	Ally, brother/sister, friend
19-21	becca	Blade, defender
22-24	bev	Child, son/daughter
25-27	bow	Bearer, keeper, worker
28-30	chir	Ali, call, speech, voice
31-33	chit	Champion, hero
34-36	cuk	Companion, husband/wife
37-39	dirt	Safety, sky, treetop
40-42	evge	Beast, katana, rage
43-45	kabukk	Ancestor, councilor, guide
46-48	kazza	Ghost, spirit, tracker
49-51	kkala	Child, rogue, scoundrel
52-54	lanna	Cry, growl, roar
55-57	napia	Rain, season, storm
58-60	mum	Claw, climber, tool
61-63	nik	Jester, joker, riddle, webweaver
64-66	orral	Stalder, treasure, worthy
67-69	owa	Eye, gazer, seeker, see
70-72	pirr	Builder, forger, trader
73-75	porin	Sage, scholar, teacher
76-78	rapao	Cousin, kin, noble
79-81	ryyhn	Danger, silk, syren plant
82-84	tatha	Bite, biter, claw
85-87	tharr	Flyer, swimmer
88-90	lobuck	Music, singer, song
91-93	ura	Captain, soldier, warrior
94-96	warr	Forest, guide, hunter, scout
97-100	ykam	Dancer, walker



Star Wars Bounty Hunter

BY ERIC BRATCHER
PLAYSTATION 2 / GAMECUBE

Star Wars fans who've been around since the original trilogy was in theaters may remember a clever little giveaway Kenner created to spike sales of its 3 3/4" action figure line. Four proofs of purchase got you a free Star Wars action figure—and not

just any figure, mind you, but a unique character that was not available in any store, at any price.

Clever marketing, to be sure, but what's interesting is the figure Kenner chose for this promotion—Boba Fett, the fiercest bounty hunter in the galaxy. When Fett's run as a promotional tool ended, another bounty hunter figure (Bossk) stepped in to run the show. The choice of these lesser-known figures was simple—bounty hunters are some of the coolest characters in the Star Wars galaxy. With that in mind, it's surprising that gamers have so rarely been given the chance to play the role of a bounty hunter. Boba Fett was one of the selectable characters in the PlayStation fighting game *Masters of Teräs Käsi*, and that's about it. Considering there have been well over 40 Star Wars games, that's not much of a presence for the galaxy's most ruthless bounty hunters.

Luckily, that's about to change. LucasArts is hard at work on *Star Wars Bounty Hunter*, a third-person action-adventure game set to make up for all these years of oversight in one fell swoop. The game lets players don the Mandalorian armor of one of the most notorious bounty hunters in the history of the galaxy—Jango Fett, father of Boba Fett and major player in the galaxy-threatening events of *Attack of the Clones*. The elder Fett is the genuine article, a hard-boiled gunslinger with a cool demeanor and all of the skills to get the job done.

Travel the galaxy, meet new and interesting people, and haul 'em in—dead or alive

Producer Joe Brisbois thinks that Jango Fett raises the bar for action heroes. "Even though Boba Fett was, uh, somewhat limited in his effectiveness," he says of the bounty hunter's appearance in the classic trilogy, "he was the guy everybody wanted to be. When Jango comes out,

he's going to take that to a whole new level. When you're done playing *Star Wars Bounty Hunter*, and you play as the hero in another game, you should say to yourself, 'Jango Fett would kick this guy's butt.'"

The Setup

Despite Jango's prominent role in *Attack of the Clones*, the action in *Star Wars Bounty Hunter* actually takes place roughly ten years earlier, just a short time after the events of *The Phantom Menace*. The game's story fleshes out events that are only mentioned in *Attack of the Clones*.

"It was important for us to not just retell the movie plot," says Director Jon Knoles, adding with a smile "Especially in this case, because our game's hero is a villain in the film, and in Star Wars movies the villains don't always wind up on top. In a game, you have to come out a winner."

The story begins when Darth Sidious charges his new right-hand man with dismantling a cult that is interfering with his plan for domination of the galaxy. The henchman's solution is to hire a number of the galaxy's most tenacious bounty hunters to dispose of the cult's leader. Jango's resume is on the top of the stack, and the wheels that drive the game's plot are set in motion.



Jaster's Legacy

Hardcore *Star Wars* historians should be thrilled to hear that they can learn the origin of *Slave I* in *Star Wars Bounty Hunter*. How? Alas, we're not cleared to reveal that secret so soon. The last thing we want is a death mark on our heads. However, the vessel Jango flies before he acquires *Slave I* is likely to lead to quite a bit of Expanded Universe speculation: It's a run-down, Mandalorian jalopy named *Jaster's Legacy*.

Could *Jaster's Legacy* have something to do with Jaster Mareel, the name commonly believed to have been Boba Fett's original moniker? We can neither confirm nor deny such theories, but rumors are now circulating that Jaster Mareel could have been one of Boba's earlier assumed names, not his (or her—there are a lot of rumors out there) given name. Hopefully, between *Star Wars Bounty Hunter* and *Attack of the Clones*, we'll finally get some answers to these questions surrounding the Fett mystique.

Game Play

Even at this early stage of development, *Star Wars Bounty Hunter* is shaping up to be an action fan's dream, sharing some elements with successful titles like Activision's *Spider-Man* and Sony's *Syphon Filter* series while preserving the unique identity of the main character. Because of Jango's two-fisted gun fighting style, the action will be fast and furious, resembling nothing so much as a Wild West showdown.

For inspiration, Bribols says, "We looked at *Metal Gear Solid 2*. It's a great game, but one that's slower paced and more stealthy in its nature. But when you look at Jango, with his jetpack and armor, he's more the type of guy who's going to kick down the door and blast anybody in his way rather than go out of his way to avoid a confrontation."

Jon Knoles echoes this sentiment. "The guy looks cool just standing there. His signature weapon is a pair of blasters. He's sort



of a space cowboy.

That's something we want to play up a lot."

Space cowboy or not, don't let Jango's predilection for blasters let you think that he doesn't have other weapons at his disposal. His arsenal could make even Batman, Inspector Gadget, or James Bond's Q jealous. Throughout the game, Jango wields at least a dozen different weapons ranging from grenades and a sniper rifle to more exotic fare, like a jet pack-mounted rocket and a wrist-mounted flamethrower. Of course, Jango's other wrist conceals a whipcord for those bounties that absolutely, positively must be delivered alive. Even without this fabulous array of toys, Jango is never weaponless as long as he has his fists for pummeling and his feet for a swift kick.

Jango is fast and surprisingly nimble, despite his armor. The design team focused on these qualities while creating the game. Even this early in development, Jango's controls are already quick, smooth, and responsive. He can run, jump, and dodge from side to side. He can lock onto a target and strafe around it, and when wielding a blaster in each hand, he can fire at two different targets simultaneously. He can hang from a ledge by his fingertips, pulling himself up or moving along the ledge's edge

with his hands. He can also go around corners while hanging or even leap from one ledge to another—a very welcome talent for Lara Croft and

Metal Gear Solid fans.

But you don't care about all those abilities. We know what you really want to read about: the jet pack.





Knoles describes the jet pack as "your ace in the hole." Bursting to life at the touch of a button, it lets you make giant leaps, dash quickly in any direction, and perform complex maneuvers like strafing or somersaulting sideways while suspended momentarily in mid-air. The pack won't enable you to actually fly, however, a limitation Knoles explains as necessary to keep *Star Wars Bounty Hunter* from becoming too much like a helicopter shooting game. Still, it's quite clear that Jango has a wide variety of moves for gamers to master. He'll need them, too. He might be the toughest bounty hunter in the galaxy, but there are plenty who want to see him vaporized—not the least of which is his ultimate bounty, the mysterious cult leader.

The Story

Jango's adventure begins at Outland Station, a sort of galactic truck stop that looks like a seedy Hong Kong street market. Jango has tracked a bounty to the domed space station, and after capturing his prey, he meets with the station's owner, his friend Rozatta. She's a tough old Toydarian who has received a message offering Jango a chance to participate in a special bounty. When Rozatta learns the target of the hunt, however, she urges Jango to pass on the job. Little is known about the cult, but a few details are certain. For instance, the cult members steal all the dead from the battlefield after a skirmish, convincing the pragmatic Toydarian that they are not to be trifled with. Needless to say, Jango takes the job despite his friend's warning, and the story begins in earnest.

There are over a dozen levels in *Star Wars Bounty Hunter*, covering six worlds ranging from the bowels of Coruscant to the desert wastelands of Tatooine, a maximum-security asteroid prison, and beyond. During the pursuit, Jango tangles with smugglers, a corrupt politician, a Krayt Dragon, an army of Dugs, and hordes of the galaxy's most wretched scum and villainy, not to mention fierce competition from rival bounty hunters.

In all of these locations, Jango stalks through the dark, steamy underbelly of the galaxy. Indeed, the overall atmosphere of the game is much darker than in most *Star Wars* adventures. With such an anti-hero as a main character, that choice was obvious.

"Jango is a villain in the movie," explains Knoles. "He's not really evil. He's just a guy



doing a job, but he's still there doing all this nasty stuff. How do you make someone like that a hero in a game? It might be fun to just play a bad guy running around slaughtering Jedi, but if the Jedi are the worst adversaries you're going to run into, that's not very compelling—or heroic. What we wanted to do was create a really dark,



seedy, spooky world filled with villains that even a ruthless bounty hunter might fear."

Quite a challenge, to be sure, but Knoles' team seems to have attained this ominous goal. A Krayt Dragon is an awesome beast, and Dugs are both quick and mean, but they're nothing compared to Montross, a brutal bounty hunter whom Jango regards as an arch nemesis. Though little is known about Montross and his connection to Jango, it's clear that this bounty hunter gives new meaning to the term "cold-blooded."

Knoles explains, "Jango Fett may be cold and calculating,

but Montross is totally ruthless. We introduce him blasting some poor guy begging for mercy despite his pleading, 'I'm worth more alive!' Montross just replies, 'You're worth enough dead,' and blows him away." Montross is hunting the same ultimate

prize as Jango, so the two will cross paths from


time to time. Naturally, the bounty hunters typically punctuate these occasions with blaster fire and explosions.

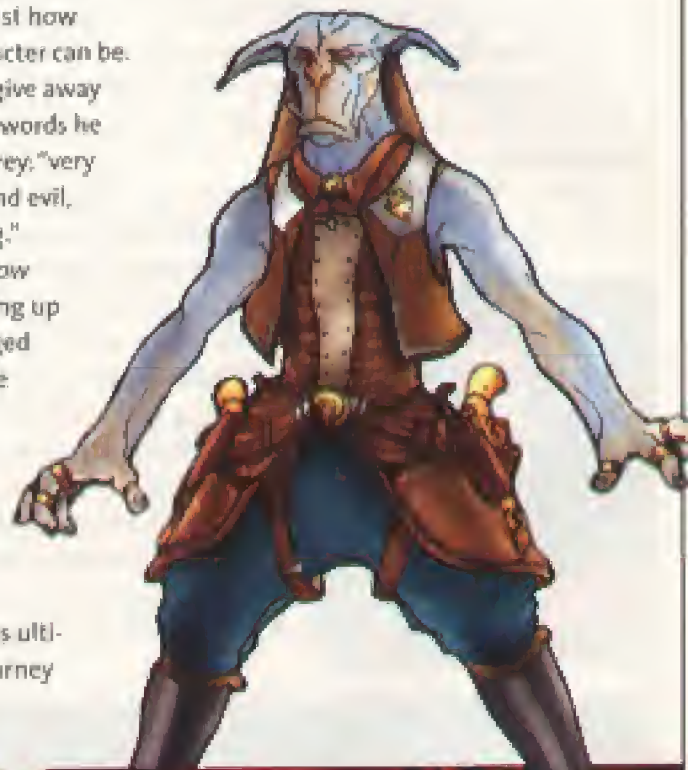
Speaking of that final bounty, expect it to be an ultimate example of just how much worse than Jango a character can be. While Knoles was reluctant to give away too many details, these are the words he uses to describe the ultimate prey, "very creepy, mysterious, powerful, and evil, with a past that's... interesting."

"It's kind of an *Apocalypse Now* angle," he says. "They were going up the river to capture this deranged Colonel Kurtz. That's kind of the same idea. This is a bizarre character stirring up trouble, this cult is growing, and nobody knows who he or she is, where they are, or how to stop it. The closer Jango gets to finding this ultimate bounty, the darker his journey will become."

Always a Pleasure

Star Wars Bounty Hunter is still months away from completion.

Regardless, the concept and storyline of the game are among the most exciting, compelling ideas we've heard in quite some time, and Jango is an incredibly appealing main character. When this game arrives on store shelves this winter, PlayStation 2 owners everywhere will do well to track it down. 



STAR WARS KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC

Before the Dark Times

BY ELLIOTT CHIN

XBOX

Star Wars games are full of action, putting you at the controls of an X-wing or slapping a lightsaber into your hand. While the play is fast and fun, previous *Star Wars* games have rarely had epic scope, and their stories could never rival those of the films. To create an entirely new galactic saga, LucasArts looked thousands of years to the past, where it saw fertile ground for an original tale of vast proportion. Entitled *Knights of the Old Republic*, this game takes place during the height of the Old Republic, an era whose surface has barely been scratched by comic books. With this offering, LucasArts hopes to present a game with as much depth and scope as the classic *Star Wars* films.

Knights of the Old Republic is currently under development by BioWare Studios, a name computer roleplaying game fans will recognize instantly. Based in Edmonton, Canada, BioWare created the *Baldur's Gate* line of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ computer games, breathing life back into the waning PC roleplaying genre. Now BioWare has its hands on another huge license, and it's using all its experience to craft an even better roleplaying experience, one that exemplifies all that is *Star Wars*.



This lush Dantooline plain is but one of many photorealistic settings you'll journey to in *Knights of the Old Republic*.

A Longer Time Ago

Knights of the Old Republic takes place four thousand years before the events in *The Phantom Menace*. This time period, during which the Old Republic flourished and the Jedi Knights were at the height of their power, was introduced in the Dark Horse Comics series that detailed the rise of the Sith and their war against the Jedi. The epic battles between Sith and Jedi were hinted at in the comics, but in *Knights of the Old Republic*, BioWare and LucasArts hope to show off these climactic clashes in all their glory, bringing this rich history to life.

Fans of the Dark Horse series should note that the timeline of this game does not overlap the events in the comics. In fact, the game takes place roughly 50 years after the events of that story. While it's thus too late to visit heroes and villains such as Ulic Qel-Droma and Exar Kun, the game includes occasional references to these individuals, and sometimes a tangible legacy, such as Exar Kun's lightsaber as an obtainable artifact in the game. The events of the comics are not the focus of this game, however, and knowledge of them is not required to play. Instead, BioWare is taking this



opportunity to create a whole new *Star Wars* setting separate from the films, books, and comics, with you as the star.

At last year's Electronic Entertainment Expo, LucasArts first announced *Knights of the Old Republic* as a game for the PC. Recently they announced that *Knights* will also be headed to the Xbox game console, and that the Xbox version will ship first. This news may be disappointing for PC owners, but LucasArts feels it can present the first true RPG on the Xbox and doesn't want to miss that window of opportunity. Thus, *Knights of the Old Republic* will ship for Xbox at the end of 2002, while the PC version will ship in the spring of 2003. Despite the difference in ship dates, LucasArts says the two versions will be virtually identical, except for perhaps interfaces and other minor elements.

Party Time

You begin play in *Knights of the Old Republic* as you do in BioWare's previous roleplaying games, by creating your own character, rather than getting dropped into the shoes of a fully fleshed-out persona, as in many traditional RPGs. That's not to say that your character doesn't have a history or that the story doesn't revolve around your actions throughout the game. It simply means you get to customize this main hero of the game to your own tastes. BioWare provides a pre-generated main character for those who just want to jump into the action. As anyone who has played *Baldur's Gate* knows, it's more gratifying to play a character you create yourself.

According to BioWare, *Knights of the Old Republic* will let you control up to ten characters that you meet at various points in the game. Some are Jedi Knights, even Wookiee and Twi'lek varieties, but there is also a Republic soldier, a Mandalorian, an astromech repair droid, and an assassin droid akin to IG-88. Although you'll find many companions, you can control only three at a time. No word yet on what happens to the other characters that you aren't controlling, but it seems likely that they would be loitering in your starship when they aren't adventuring with you.



You can only have three characters in your party at a time, although you'll find nearly a dozen that will join you.

Your character is the hero of the story, but he or she has an important sibling. If you play a male character, she's your sister; if you play a female, he's your brother. Either way, your sibling is the second-most powerful Jedi in the galaxy.

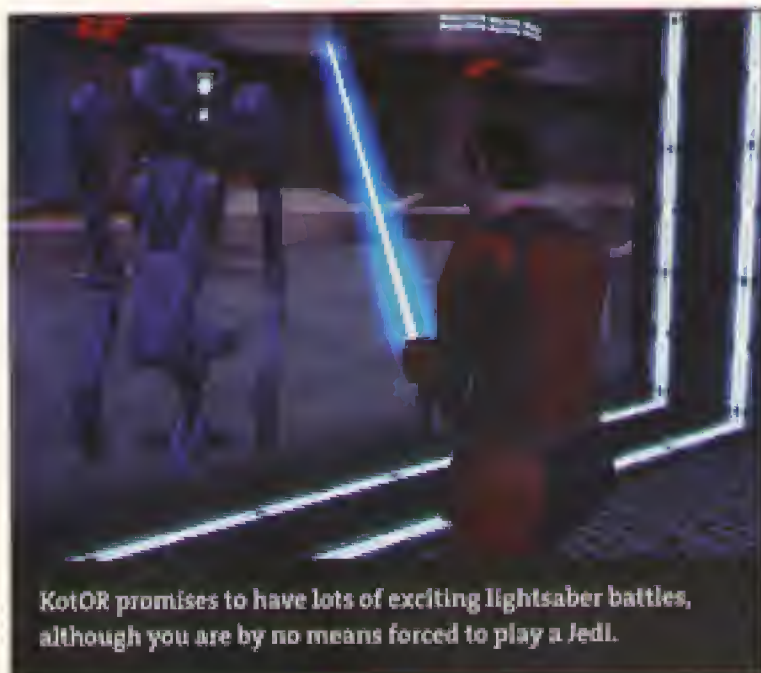
So who's the most powerful?

According to BioWare, the most powerful Jedi is the one your character is hunting, so it's a good bet that you won't be ready to go saber-to-saber with this character until late in the game.

The *Star Wars* Experience

The story of *Knights of the Old Republic* is a classic struggle of good versus evil between the light side of the Force and the dark side. Unlike in the *Star Wars* movies, the forces of the Sith are abundant and out in the open during the Old Republic period. There are thousands of Jedi and Sith, so battles between





KOTOR promises to have lots of exciting lightsaber battles, although you are by no means forced to play a Jedi.

the two orders are gigantic conflicts that engulf worlds. There will also be a more personal storyline, but LucasArts is jealously guarding that secret at this point. Casey Hudson, producer at BioWare says,

the game will have "romance, action, the whole *Star Wars* experience." That experience will include epic battles with hordes of enemies. Last year, at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, LucasArts announced the game by showing off a short demo, revealing battles between dozens of Sith and Jedi, with a multitude of flashing lightsabers illuminating rooms and reflecting off glass floors. In addition to the deadly Sith, you'll also interact with many aliens, creatures, mercenaries, and droids. The array of concept sketches and 3D models already finished for the game include Bith, Ithorians, Jawas, Rodians, a Krayt dragon, rancors, different variations of



mynochs, and many creatures created by BioWare for this game, including great manta-like rays that serve as air transportation.

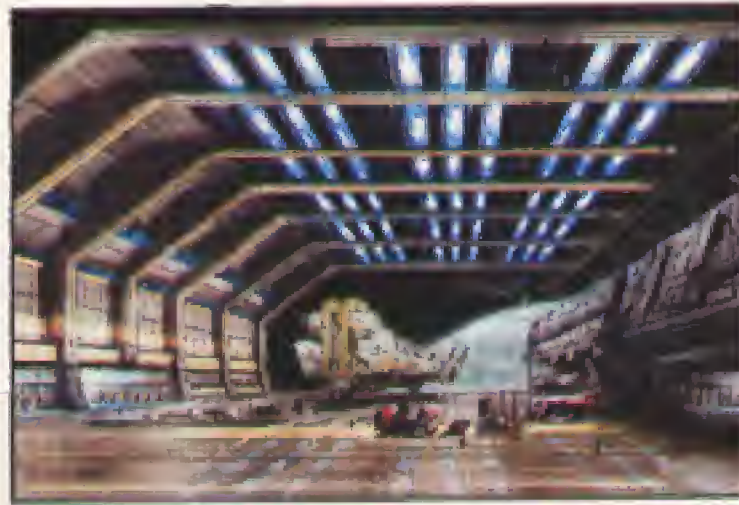
Another staple of the *Star Wars* experience is visiting different worlds. In our demo of *Knights of the Old Republic*, we saw two of the many planets that will be in the game: Dantooine and Kashyyyk. The Dantooine grasslands were lush and beautiful. The graphics in this game are astounding; every blade of grass is a true 3D object, and as our character moved through the tall grass, it would bend aside as we pushed into it, and then whip back into place behind us. In the game, that level of detail means you might see the grass swaying to the movements of a stalking predator, giving you a warning that could mean the difference between survival and ignominious death. There is also a wind system that moves hair, objects, and clothing. All these effects create a greater sense of verisimilitude than we've yet seen in a video game. The usual glaring sun flare effects and an utterly convincing sky likewise contributed to a realistic setting.

Dantooine and Kashyyyk are but two of eight to ten major locations in the game. In addition, you'll travel to Tatooine, Taris, several space stations and starships, as well as an underwater world. Many of these locations vary dramatically in size; one planet might contain dozens of different areas: several cities, plains filled with ruins to explore, underground caverns, and more. While other settings might be much more compact, as in the case of a space station. BioWare says the scale will be realistic, but unlike *Baldur's Gate*, which required characters to perform heroic feats of walking between distant locations, Hudson says every area will have something to see or explore; there will be no "dead zones" in this game.

The most prominent location in the game might be the ship, *Ebon Hawk*. It's a well-worn freighter, like the *Millennium Falcon* but with a wedge missing from its hull, and it's also your character's main base of operations throughout the game. This is where you'll rest between quests, where your inactive characters stay until you need them, and how you'll travel from system to system. In Casey Hudson's words, "We want it to be another character."

Matters of the Force

With the game still more than half a year away, LucasArts is tight-lipped about the character progression in the game. Naturally, your character will gain experience and advance in levels, and as you





grow more powerful, a menu of Force powers becomes available. According to Gallo, you'll be able to use all the Force powers demonstrated in the movies, as well as many new powers for a total of more than fifty. Gallo also indicated that there would be various weapons and items to use in the game, saying, "You'll be able to use most of the weapon types that you've seen in the movies, plus a number of weapons never before seen in video games or movies."

Wizards of the Coast has already created the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, so it would seem only natural to use a similar d20 mechanic in *Knights of the Old Republic*. Hudson agrees that the tabletop system provides many solutions for the computer roleplaying design, but he notes that even that ready-made system would require some modification to fit into a computer structure. Still, LucasArts appears to be considering using Wizards' roleplaying game for its presentation of character classes, Force powers, skills, and such. So far, there is no official word on whether BioWare will use this existing set of rules or create its own for *Knights of the Old Republic*.

One element of play that LucasArts is comfortable describing this early is the mini-games. Many console RPGs include these mini-games, often card or sports games the characters in the role-playing world can play. In *Knights of the Old Republic*, such in-game diversions will include a collectible card game called Pazak and a turret-shooting game.

Throughout the game, your characters can play Pazak, a card game like Blackjack with a collectible element. As you travel from world to world, you'll find new cards to add to your deck and new



On Kashyyk, you'll see Wookiees in their natural habitat, and perhaps even gain the services of a Wookiee party member.

places to play the card game. BioWare says Pazak is a completely new game created just for *Knights*. The designers considered using the famous Sabacc but decided it was so ubiquitous to *Star Wars* fans that it wouldn't have been nearly as much fun to learn.

The turret game is sure to please trigger-happy gamers. The *Ebon Hawk* has a gun turret that you can hop into. Occasionally, you'll flee a planet and be chased by enemy fighters, at which point you can jump into the turret and start shooting away in a first-person, action view, as swarms of fighters zoom across your cockpit, just as in *A New Hope*. Of course, these mini-games are ancillary to the true gameplay in *Knights of the Old Republic*, but they reveal BioWare's commitment to making the experience fun and varied.

At this point in development, the game is at the stage where all the pieces are at last coming together. BioWare has already built nearly 90 percent of the models, including main characters, creatures, and nonplayer characters. Levels are the last piece of content to be built, and nearly all of them are coming together. The game appears to be on track for its release date of November 2002. That seems like a long way off, but if BioWare realizes its goal of crafting a new mythology as grand and exciting as the films, it could prove well worth the wait. **E**



STAR WARS RACER REVENGE

Turn n' Burn

Earn a First-Place Finish in
Star Wars: Racer Revenge

BY SCOTT STEINBERG
PLAYSTATION 2



Times may change, but Podracers don't. Eight years have passed since Anakin Skywalker scrapped Sebulba at the Boonta Eve Classic, and Podracing is more popular—and vicious—than ever. Fast-paced, dangerous, and packed with environmental hazards, cruising the dark side of Ryloth or Mon Calamari's waterlogged reefs at 600 mph is a challenge that'd leave a Jedi Master's lightsaber limp. If you're going to make it to the final lap, take these tips from our champion road warriors, Producer Dale Geist and Lead Tester Johnny Szary.

Know the Basics

Races are unpredictable, but by applying these common-sense tactics, you'll get a leg up on opponents and stand a better chance of crossing the finish line first. Consider what the testers have to say:

Speed Is King: As a general rule, always brake going into a sharp turn, but boost coming out of it for an added advantage. When handling a particularly tight curve, power slides work best. Slowing down before attempting these maneuvers might seem counterproductive, but decreasing your momentum slightly before a turn beats crashing into a wall. Never forget to keep the boost meter recharging, and use it liberally when playing catch-up or extending a lead.

Don't Play Nice: Focus your attention strictly on one rival Podracer during combat. Never ease off. An opponent lying bruised

and battered on the side of the track is no longer a threat. When you see smoke coming from an adversary's engine, try to knock him out. Consistently charging at one side is the easiest way to finish them off. Boosts also help inflict extra damage, though you should also save them for quick catch-ups, as damaged Podracers that escape your viewing range begin repairs. When applying this strategy, avoid battling last-place opponents. Instead, concentrate on eliminating the track favorite early on; otherwise, he'll be a huge pain in the rear, particularly if you let him get too far ahead, as then he'll be extremely hard to catch. Finally, if you ever spot a competitor undergoing maintenance, smash into him to monkey wrench the repairs.

Watch Yourself: Don't let your health drop into the red zone for extended periods of time—it could be disastrous. Any time health becomes an issue, immediately repair back up to yellow status. Also, use boosts to make up for any lost time due to Podracer slowdown while repairing when no longer critically injured. It's also important to avoid overheating. Although the repair command can cool engines immediately, the sooner you pump truguts into raising your Cooling attribute the better.

Look for Trouble: Maintaining a broad viewpoint is imperative. Stick to the middle of the track so you can spot upcoming turns with less hassle. Watch your radar fire-

quently as well for trailing opponents, who can easily be forced into walls or obstacles if they try to pass you.

Money Talks: Watto's Garage and the upgrades it provides are more important than you think. Never forget to spend truguts enhancing attributes for future races. Podracers that sport low scores in certain areas may find it hard, if not impossible, to win—or even finish—various races.

Catch a Break: Sometimes the road less taken can be more productive. Many tracks sport multiple paths, including some shortcuts. If you have trouble placing on a particular course, try it first in Time Trial or Practice mode to discover them all. Or cheat and follow the leader. Under solo modes, the track favorite always knows the shortest route.

Go For Broke: Rush for the finish line with gusto. At the end of a race boost, even if it means risking engine damage. Last minute upsets are not uncommon, whether this tactic works for or against you. It's a good idea to practice shaving seconds off your final tally by practicing last-minute boosts in Time Trial mode against a ghost Podracer. For the player who bothers, the rewards can be substantial. Come in first under solo races, and you'll not only get more truguts to spend but also unlock hidden characters as well.

Advanced Tactics

Because not all beings are created equal, once you've got the gist of amateur maneuvers, try these high-risk tricks. With a little skill and a lot of luck, you too can have your praises sung at the Mos Eisley Cantina... or earn official "roadkill" status much faster.

Brains Over Brawn: You can't always fight at tip-top shape, but you can minimize the risk of a fatal crash. During a fierce shoving match, use repair functions to slow down if

you need a target to catch up slightly. By the time he's in your sights again, your Podracer will be in much better condition for melee.

Full Speed Ahead: Cut right to the chase and boost immediately following the countdown for an added burst. Besides an initial head start, it provides much-needed combat advantages too. As pack leaders will find, damaging many Podracers is much easier when they're trailing behind you.

Super Power: Really put the hurt on foes by tagging them with boosted tricks and power slides. Standard Podracer-on-Podracer collisions do less damage. An uncontrolled slip out causes big damage, as do post-boost jumps, which let you soar higher and farther (and land harder) than normal. Granted, attempting such attacks is dangerous, but the risk-to-reward ratio justifies an Evel Knievel impression.

Hold Back: Sometimes the best offense is a good defense. Many course areas are strewn with obstacles. Engaging them at full throttle isn't wise. Although it seems foolish to cut engine flow in the middle of a run, especially with opponents nearby, shrewd players will view it as a necessary evil. After all, dead stops are much tougher to recover from than a few seconds' slowdown.

Think Small: Bigger isn't always better. Choose a miniscule Podracer for its maneuvering capabilities, and then squeeze it through as many tight spots as possible to gain valuable time.

Galactic Tour Guide

Five planets host the festivities, spanning thirteen tracks in total. Each varies according to lighting conditions, composition of terrain, and elevation. Only by knowing what hazards lie ahead can you be prepared for the challenges that await.

RYLOTH

Home of the Twi'leks, including such notables as Jabba's right-hand man Bib Fortuna and dancer-turned-hors d'oeuvre Oola. One side of the planet is cloaked in perpetual darkness due to a lack of axial rotation. As a result, the other side suffers from blinding light and heat. Between the two realms lurks a band of twilight, where the Twi'leks dwell.

Course 1: The Brightlands

Pure, windblown sandy terrain colors this desert run. Craters and odd tusk-like structures obscure the otherwise level terrain, forcing Podracer crowding and mandatory melee.

Course 2: The Nightlands

Curious bioluminescent entities light the planet's darker half, providing dim illumination for a shadow-cloaked race. Speed through a tight canyon, and then swoop low into an equally tight subterranean cavern. Afterwards, ease back a bit and emerge onto a less aggravation-inducing wasteland resplendent with the blinking lights of far-off constructs.

GAMORR

This forest-choked planet is home to the swinish Gamorreans, giving new meaning to the term "pig out." When not serving as cannon fodder for a certain ill-fated Hutt, natives appreciate tranquil mountain groves and rushing streams when not hiding in wooden outposts that dot the landscape. Or, for that matter, watching Podracers tear up otherwise peaceful open fields.

Course 1: Watchtower Run

This begins simply enough in a tiny Gamorrean village, but rapidly picks up steam



while winding through a forest of tightly knit trees. Then come open fields over which you can boost before you're forced to wrap around a watchtower and dip into a massive crater that sports plenty of makeshift obstacles, primarily of the junk or debris variety.

Course 2: The Ruins Of Carnuss Gorguul

Initially set around ancient, crumbling structures, giant stone heads above aren't laughing anymore once you enter the forest again. Following this area, you'll whiz past a huge starship wreck. Last but not least comes a canyon run, prompting less tactical planning and more melee action.

Never forget to keep the boost meter recharging, and use it liberally

Course 3: The Citadel

Less of a forested course, the brush quickly gives way to a brief canyon visit, quickly succeeded by a spin around a lake. Next you go upward, cruising a mountain that approaches a Gamorrean citadel complete with statues, fortified walls, and a pesky defense gun. Finally, it's down through an obstacle-strewn battlefield, through the Cave of Shrieks, and into the village. Albeit not in as good shape as before the contest.

MON CALAMARI

Here, among gleaming cities and stunning coral-like reefs, lurk two familiar species, the squid-faced Quarren and lobster-esque Mon Calamari.

Course 1: Orotoru G'am

Upwardly mobile, this track first sees Podracers surmount the elevated roadway system, then tackle the crowded plazas of Orotoru G'am city. Corkscrewing through a museum, you hit the ground level. A final zone clogged by fountains and terraces awaits before a return to the arena where all contests begin.

Course 2: The Ballast Complex

Again, it's a citywide affair. After the plazas, the next stop is underground, past various bits of machinery and ballast tanks that keep the city afloat. Provided one survives this too-close-for-comfort track, it's back to the arena you go.

Course 3: The Grand Reefs

At last you have a chance to leave the city. Depart the arena and head for the distant coastline by crossing a bridge that leads to a chain of coral reefs and islands. "Luckily" for roadsters, giant worms have carved out tunnels and caverns there. Once it's finished tormenting players, the game lets you follow the path around the reef and return to the city without further hassle.

SULLUST

A toxic, volcanic world with a civilization forced to live beneath the planet's surface. Tunnels and passages connect an underground chain of cities, though many of these byways have become long forgotten and abandoned as time passed. Naturally, it makes prime stomping grounds for Podracing.

Course 1: SoroSuub Facility

Zooming through the bustling production area of this starship manufacturing facility, Podracers head up to the planet's surface. Tight glass tubes protect you from the noxious vapors but also promote aggressive behavior. The event is capped by a return trip that takes you through a massive shipyard that boasts some truly hairy spots.

Course 2: Serres Sarrano

This race starts at the Sullustan arena, then plummets toward the gargantuan city of Serres Sarrano. Expect a plunge into the pipes and tunnels that head for the planet's core shortly thereafter. Much trouble ensues as players fight for position on rock ledges that teeter precariously above lava lakes.

TATOOINE

Podracing's unofficial capital. Here, the Boonta Eve Classic takes place courtesy of its upstanding Hutt sponsors. Familiar to any fan of the series, environments should evoke instant flashbacks, though some new surprises await as well.

Course 1: The Mos Espa Open

Go for the scenic route, touring Jabba's palace and heading out across the Dune Sea past his sail barge. Troublesome turns label it strictly for experienced players. Even onlookers will gasp and shudder as you race around the krayt dragon and past wandering bantha herds.

Course 2: The Badlands

All desert, all the time. Except for the occasional moisture farm. Hellish landscapes include gorges and canyon breaks that'll throw you for a loop. For further amusement, LucasArts has thrown in vexing



encounters with a sandcrawler and Jawa settlement on the return trip.

Course 3: The Boonta Eve Classic

In a word, *finito*. That would mean the end for both the contest and you. How to slip up? Let us count the ways: Beggar's Canyon, Arch Canyon, Jett's Chute, and aggressive rivals all too happy to bump you off-course faster than the unforgiving terrain.

Driver's Ed

Things are getting steamy in the hot seat. Competition won't ease up, the tracks are throwing you for a loop, and that galactic-class trophy seems a million parsecs away. Adopt these winning strategies for select courses, and you'll soon be humming a cheerful tune all the way to the finish line while competitors choke on your dust.

MOS ESPA OPEN

- When you are near the starting or finishing line, stay toward the center of the track. Otherwise, shops lying along-side the course will slow you down.
- For an essential shortcut, head for the cave to the right and veer right near the end of it to scream past Jabba's palace. Watch out for sharp turns, however. Should you be flying a Podracer that turns fast, instead head straight out of the tunnels and avoid the hairpin curves.

SOROSUUB FACILITY

- After passing the crowds in the grandstands, take the shortcut to the right. Be advised, you might need to brake or power slide to make it.
- Those in the know will realize the tube can be navigated without steering. Just punch the accelerator and go.

- Looking for a good combat zone? Toward the end of the track you'll notice a building with a hole in the center that you can drive through. Try nudging enemies into a wall here for maximum effect.

OROTRU GAM

- Avoid the two ascending ramps and stick to the far right. This route keeps you on straightaways longer, improving lap times and your chances at engaging in a successful combat encounter.
- Maintain position toward the inside of the pillars when descending the spiral in the Hall of Heroes. It'll shave precious seconds off of your run.
- The flat stretch following the Hall of Heroes is prime ground for knocking out opponents. Some competitors will be damaged after going down the spiral immediately beforehand, making the job that much easier.


THE BADLANDS

- Stay left at the first fork, which will lead you to a Sandcrawler. After passing it and taking the jump, soar left while in the air. You'll go past a building and moisture farm settlement. Jump into the pit that appears next, then go through the blast doors to uncover a shortcut.
- Following the huge drop, the track winds leftward. On the left wall, a shortcut awaits. Take the left turn after the second directional arrow, thereby avoiding a sharp curve.

THE GRAND REEFS

- Taking the bridge is the most direct route, but it's dangerous nonetheless. Consider jumping off and racing in the water to the side if necessary.
- At the first area where water lies following the bridge scene, hang a sharp left near the rocky outcroppings. You'll wind up on a more productive path to the next track area.
- See those three arches above the track? At this point, take a left off the path and into the water. Race for the two large Calamari statues for a time-saving bonus.

BOONTA EVE CLASSIC

- Once you've left the starting line, stay right to remain on a path above the part of the track that's cluttered by obstacles.
- Play defensively. Often, it's necessary to bounce off walls to make turns. In general, sticking to the left side will help you avoid debris-choked areas.
- Break through the gate, then take the service ramp. You'll reach a windy part of the track. Sounds troublesome, but all computer-controlled adversaries take this shortcut, and if you miss it, an even hairier stretch of track awaits.
- At the rock arch area, lean toward the right. You'll avoid going through the arches and line up with the entrance to the narrow passage found at the end. 



Knight Moves

Jedi Starfighter Basic Strategy Guide

BY BRETT RECTOR
PLAYSTATION 2

The galaxy is in turmoil. The evil Captain Toth and his mysterious cohort amass a fleet that threatens the very foundations of the Galactic Republic. In an effort to quell a rapidly expanding secessionist movement, Mace Windu has dispatched one of the Council's top Jedi, Adi Gallia, to investigate disturbances in the Karthakk system. Adi embarks on a series of missions that could decide the balance of power in the universe. Only the strongest Jedi will survive.

Pilots and Starfighters

During your tour of duty, you'll command two unique pilots: Jedi Master Adi Gallia and Feeorin pirate captain Nym. Each fly a custom craft armed with specially designed weapons to carry out specific tasks. The game automatically selects which pilot you'll use based on the mission objectives.

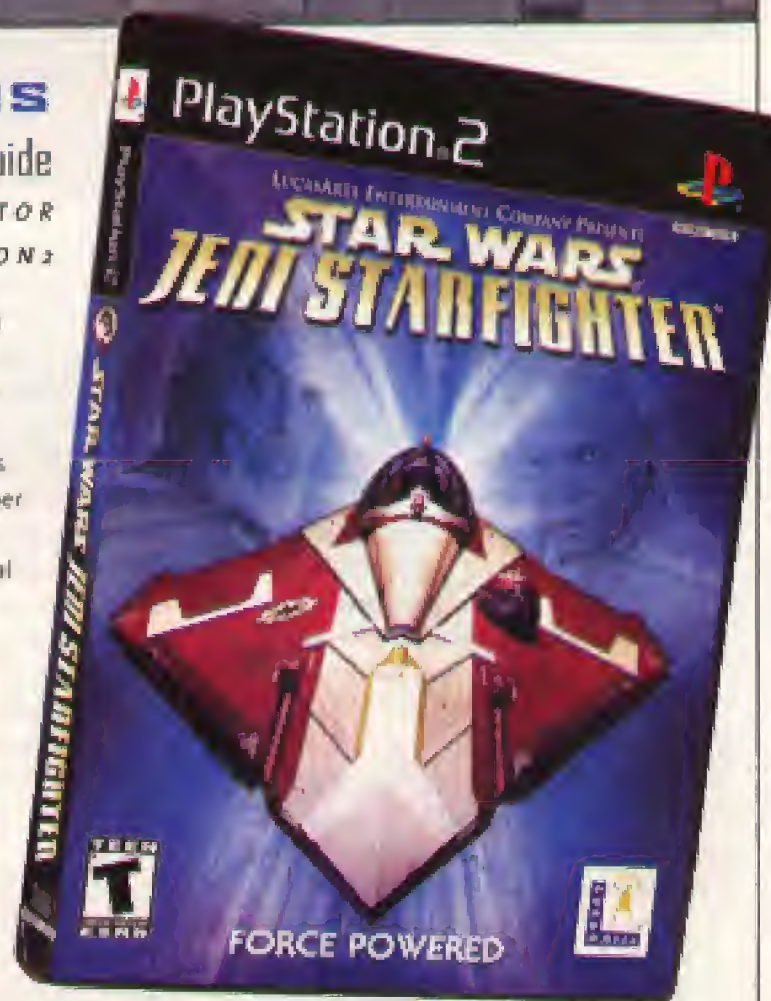
ADI GALLIA

This powerful pilot is a Corellian Jedi Master born and raised on the mammoth planet of Coruscant. Adi Gallia, the daughter of high-standing diplomats, is a headstrong woman who leads by example. Her no-nonsense attitude commands a great deal of respect. In addition to being member of the Jedi Council Adi is a skilled starfighter pilot, making her the perfect candidate to test out the prototype Jedi Starfighter.

DELTA-7: PROTOTYPE JEDI STARFIGHTER

In the fight against the Trade Federation, the Republic Jedi are always looking to grab the upper hand. There's no better way to achieve that goal than with the development of the Delta-7 starfighter. This small, agile craft has been modified to include a more powerful engine with hyperdrive capabilities and an enhanced repulsorlift system allowing the pilot to maneuver with great accuracy and high angles of approach. Its state-of-the-art quad-pulse lasers aren't especially powerful, but their high rate of fire more than make up for this limitation. Note that the Delta-7's light armor makes it susceptible to enemy attacks, a vulnerability that can prove dangerous when facing larger capital-class spaceship.

Primary Weapon: Quad-Pulse Lasers
Secondary Weapon: Being a Jedi Master, Adi can control up to four Force Powers, which become exceptionally useful throughout your campaigns.



NYM

Who says scoundrels can't be trusted? Until you've fought beside one, you shouldn't pass judgment. Nym is an imposing Feeorin alien with brilliant tactical skills and a long criminal history to match. His underhanded actions have made him a prime enemy of the Trade Federation. Ten years ago, the Federation invaded the Karthakk system and seized control of Nym's base on Lok. Ever since then, he has been amassing a small pirate



resistance with which he hopes to reclaim his base and drive away the Federation.

THE HAVOC

While it lacks the speed and maneuverability of Adi's Delta-7 starfighter, the *Havoc* is a very well rounded, not to mention dangerous, strike bomber. It's even been said the *Havoc* is the most powerful ship in the sec-

tor, which is due in large part to Nym and Reti's (a fellow pirate/mechanic) modifications. In addition to its six laser cannons, the *Havoc* can be equipped with a number of unique bombs, missiles, and mines. Combined with its tough outer hull, which is built to take a bigger beating than the Delta-7, Nym's handcrafted starfighter is especially useful when knocking out large

stationary targets, such as gun turrets and heavily armored tanks, and challenging larger spacecraft.

Primary Weapon: Dual Triple-Laser Cannons

Secondary Weapon: The *Havoc* can be equipped with four secondary weapons: Energy Bombs (default), Cruise Missiles, Cluster Missiles, and Proximity Mines.

Inside the Cockpit

Before you can master your starfighters' capabilities, you need to get a handle on what you're looking at, including the ship status displays, the targeting system, and the weapons system for the Delta-7 Starfighter and the *Havoc*. **HEADS-UP DISPLAY (HUD)** Even though each ship is equipped with a different arsenal of weapons, the general Heads-Up Display (HUD) is the same for both. While the primary purpose of the HUD is to aid you in battle, it serves a number of functions. From the standard battle view of your starfighter, you can use your targeting sight and your current target tracker, as well as monitor your ship's health or status.

A. TARGETING SIGHT

This is one of your ship's more useful tools because it shows where your primary weapons are aimed. You'll notice that the look of the targeting sight slightly changes when you switch to a secondary weapon. When you are piloting the *Havoc* during a planetary mission and aim a secondary bombing weapon, a red targeting sight appears.

B. TARGET TRACKER

Use the Target Tracker to follow your enemy or ally across the screen. Green brackets indicate a friendly craft, while red brackets indicate an enemy craft. You can also tell just how much damage your friend or foe has taken by the curved half-circles beneath the ship: the green line on the left side indicates the shield strength, and the orange line on the right side indicates the hull strength (health). As you hammer your target, you'll notice that the shield strength is the first to go. Once you see the orange line depleting, it's only a matter of time before the craft explodes.

C. IN-FLIGHT COMMUNICATION

During a battle, other ships sometimes try to communicate with you and a transmission is indicated by a yellow halo appearing over that craft. If the surrounding terrain obscures your ship's view, the halo changes to a broken circle. You can also see who is communicating with you if they're off-screen by a yellow arrow pointing in the direction of the speaker's ship.

D. SHIP STATUS

It's important to know how much punishment you've taken and how much secondary-weapon ammo or Force power you've expended during any given mission, which you can do by viewing your ship-status display at the bottom left-hand corner of your HUD. With a glance you can tell the strength of your shields, indicated by the green bars on the upper right side of your display, and the level of hull strength (health), indicated by the yellow bar on the lower right side of your display.

Depending on which pilot you're using, you can tell how much secondary-weapon ammo you have left or else view your Jedi

Meditation Timer by looking at the circle on the left side of your display. You can also tell what secondary weapon or Force power you are using by looking in the center of your ship-status display and viewing the highlighted quadrant. By pressing and holding the L1 Button, you can change the inner portion of the display to view your Wingmate Command Interface.

E. OBJECTIVE TRACKER

On some missions, you must protect certain ally craft or attack specific enemy craft. Your ship's Objective Tracker is an important tool that lets you track these key ships during your mission. Friendly ships appear onscreen colored blue with green, while enemy ships are colored blue with red. Again, be careful which ship you help and which ship you fire upon.

F. JEDI MEDITATION TIMER (JEDI STARFIGHTER ONLY)

After using a Force power, a Jedi needs to rest for a short while before she is strong enough to use the Force again. Once you've used a Force power, the two bars on the left side of your ship status display vanish, and then slowly begin to regenerate over time. As soon as both bars have finished regenerating, the circle between the two will light up, notifying you that your mind is clear and the Force is with you. It's also important to note that each Force power regenerates at a different rate.




Advanced Targeting Systems

In addition to your ship's regular targeting system, each craft is equipped with more advanced commands that enable you to bear down more effectively on your enemies. Practice using these techniques, as they greatly enhance your chance for success as you battle the Trade Federation.



REVENGE TARGETING

While it is clear that Jedi do not take revenge, your starfighters are still equipped with this feature nonetheless. As soon as you've taken damage, press the Auto Target button to lock your targeting site on your aggressor's craft, and then fire away.

BORE-SITE TARGETING


One of the most effective ways to target a specific ship within your field of view is to engage Bore-Site Targeting. To activate this feature, use your HUD to find a ship, and then press the  Button. Your targeting sight lights up and follows the path of that enemy as it flies across the sky.

SENSOR TARGETING


You can also target multiple ships using a slight variation of Bore Targeting. By pressing and holding the  Button on your controller, you activate the Sensor Targeting function of your craft. Now, you can scroll over and target any craft in your field of vision. You can also discern which of your targets are allies and which are enemies: green indicates a friendly craft, while red indicates an adversary. By continually holding down the  Button, you'll be able to keep all ships targeted, even after they fly out of your field of view. You can note the direction of these craft by the red and green









arrows that appear onscreen. This is an extremely useful technique, especially during intergalactic battles where the darkness of space works to conceal the fighters around you.

Zoom

One of the most effective targeting tools you have available for both ships is your zoom, which you can activate by pressing and holding the  Button. This excellent battle control is especially useful when you need to target and destroy gun batteries, turrets, and laser cannons on large battle ships. Not only will you be able to stay a safe distance away from their powerful blasts, you'll be able to destroy your targets quickly and efficiently.

Wingmate Commands





Although your skills may be unmatched in a firefight, even the most powerful Jedi—or fiercest pirate—will agree that the chance of success is greater with a little help from an ally. During certain missions, you'll be asked to engage the help of fellow wingmates to complete your task. By holding  L1, the information displayed in the center of your ship's status circle changes to show the Wingmate Command Interface. Pressing the appropriate directional button enables you to communicate with all your wingmates. The commands are the same for all ships:

"Attack My Target!" Hold  L1 + 
"Protect My Target!" Hold  L1 + 
"Report In!" Hold  L1 + 
"Protect Me!" Hold  L1 + 

Force Powers:

Stretch Out with Your Feelings

Being a Jedi Master, it's only fitting that Adi be able to wield such awesome abilities. However, while her Force powers can certainly give her the edge in combat over weak-minded opponents, using them correctly takes time and skill. You begin the game with Force Shield and learn the other powers through the course of the campaign.

To use your Force power, begin by pressing the  Button. Almost immediately you will begin to see particles coalesce around your craft. As you continue to hold down this button, you will notice the particle field change color. By simply tapping and releasing the  Button, you activate the standard Connect form of the Force, and the particles change to a deep purple. By pressing and holding the  Button for the exact right amount of time, you can achieve a perfect state of Clarity and produce the most devastating form of the Force as the particles change to a bright white color. Pressing and holding the  Button too long causes you to Disconnect with the Force and produces the least effective attack. You'll notice the particles change from bright white to dark blue. Below is a list of all four force powers and what they do in each of these three states.

Force Shield (D-pad)

When activated, you create an energy barrier around your Jedi Starfighter to enhance your defense system and deflect enemy laser fire for a certain period of time.

Connect: Laser blasts are randomly deflected away from your craft.

Clarity: Laser blasts are deflected back at your enemy.

Disconnect: Laser blasts are randomly deflected away from your craft for a shorter period of time than during the Connect state.

Force Lightning (D-pad)

When activated, a powerful blast zaps an enemy's ship, rendering the pilot unconscious or destroying the ship entirely.

Connect: Damages or destroys your target and a small number of nearby enemies.

Clarity: Damages or destroys your target and a large number of nearby enemies.

Disconnect: Damages and destroys only the enemy you targeted.



Force Reflex (D-pad ↓)

This power simulates the awesome reflexes and perception of a Jedi Master. While engaged, the rest of the combatants appear as if they're moving in slow motion as you fly at near-normal speed.

Connect: Your forward motion and everything around you slows down, but your turning and firing rates remain the same, enabling you to unleash twice as much firepower.

Clarity: Same as the Connect effect, but lasts for a longer period of time

Disconnect: Same as the Connect effect, but for a shorter period of time.

Force Shockwave (D-pad ←)

A shockwave of destructive power radiates in all directions, causing damage to surrounding enemies. Beware, as it takes more mental energy than any other power.

Connect: Wave covers a modest area.

Clarity: Wave covers a bigger area.

Disconnect: Wave covers a very tiny area.

A Pirate's Life for Me

Because Nym is not proficient in the ways of the Force, he must be content with taking out enemies using cunning, precision, and brutal tactics (read: destructive firepower). Here is a breakdown of the *Havoc's* secondary weapons.

Energy Bomblets (D-pad ↑)

These powerful bombs not only pack a punch when they hit their target but recharge over time, providing you with an infinite supply. To use this weapon, line up your intended target using the terrain site, lead the target just a bit, then press the **O** Button.

Cruise Missiles (D-pad →)

They're slower than proton torpedoes, but still pack a massive punch when they hit the mark. A finite number are available per mission, so use them wisely.

Cluster Missiles (D-pad ↓)

Nym can rip through shields and go straight through another ship's hull with these destructive projectiles. Pressing the **O** Button unleashes a volley of missiles, which are best used against small fighters and squadrons.

Proximity Mines (D-pad ←)

When released, these mines drop below the *Havoc* and hover to wait for an unsuspecting enemy. You can use the mines in the air or plant them on the ground. However, make sure the coast is clear, because it takes Nym time to charge up the tubes.

General Tactics

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

It is important to become familiar with your ship's target sighting and tracker. In the heat of battle, it's sometimes difficult to discern who are your friends and who are your enemies. Every ship in the sky is susceptible to your laser fire, making it entirely possible to damage a friendly craft, thus endangering the success of your mission.

USING BOOST AND BRAKE

When engaging the enemy, it's important to be in complete control of your craft. Aside from normal flight maneuvers, you must master the art of boosting and braking effectively.

Throughout the game, you'll encounter many unique ships, some that are small and quick, and others that are large and slow.

Using your ship's boost, you can keep up with faster craft in the heat of battle. Keep in mind that, while using your boost, your ship's turning radius is decreased, making it more difficult to alter your direction quickly.

Conversely, using your ship's breaks make it easier for you to make sharp turns. Once you've closed the distance and have your target in range, decrease your boost by applying the brake, and go in for the kill.

USE THE FORCE WISELY

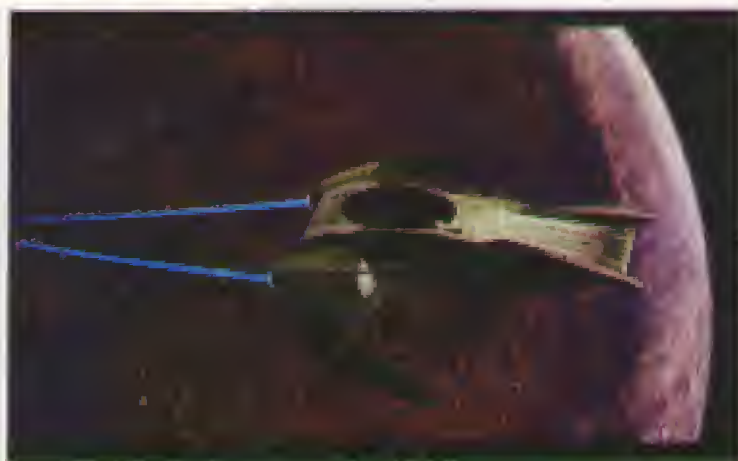
While the Force is certainly a powerful ally, using it wisely and at precisely the right moment is most beneficial. Force Lightning and Force Shockwave are best used when you're in close proximity to clustered targets; Force Shield is best for when you are attacking huge capital-class starships with large gun batteries and quick-firing laser turrets; Force Reflex is best when enemies are scattered across the battlefield or when time is a factor near the end of a mission.

CALL TO ARMS

Asking for assistance from your wingmates to take out pesky targets is not a sign of weakness. If you are in danger of failing a mission, desperately need help to destroy an enemy ship, or require an extra hand to safely protect an exposed ally, don't hesitate to ask for help. Even a Jedi can become overwhelmed.

STAY ON TARGET

To keep track of all enemy and friendly targets during an intense firefight, continue to hold down the **□** Button. It doesn't require any extra energy from your ship and is a big help when trying to locate potential threats. **E**



STAR WARS GALAXIES

Galaxies Update

Explore the Galaxy.
or Cut Hair.
The Choice is Yours.

BY HADEN BLACKMAN

PC

Star Wars Galaxies, LucasArts' Massively-Multiplayer Online game set for release in Fall 2002, will offer a wide variety of *Star Wars* experiences for all types of players. Characters in *Star Wars Galaxies* can become explorers, soldiers, scouts, and even hairdressers. As the *Star Wars Galaxies* launch date draws closer, LucasArts and the



development team at Sony Online Entertainment have supplied *Star Wars Gamer* with exclusive information about the game's diversity of character types.

Combat Machines

Combat will be a major focus of *Star Wars Galaxies*, although the game will depart from other MMOs through its heavy use of ranged weapons. Traditionally, MMOs have been swords-and-sorcery fare centered on melee combat; the addition of a robust ranged combat system allows *Star Wars Galaxies* to add even greater variety to combat scenarios and player activities.

Most players will need to have skill with at least a basic blaster in order to survive in the wild. Those players who make combat their primary pursuit will be able to learn both ranged and melee combat skills and use a wide array of weapons.

Sniper!

Specializing in certain types of combat and the use of specific weapons will allow players to attain special titles and abilities. One such "role" would be that of a sniper. *Star Wars Galaxies* will include long-range targeting skills, which will allow players to target enemies from a distance. These skills will also improve a character's ability to target specific areas of a target's body to cause greater damage or other effects.

Fett's Legacy

Among the most coveted titles in *Galaxies* is that of "bounty hunter." Like Aurra Sing or Boba Fett, players in *Star Wars Galaxies* will be able to track down wanted fugitives to increase their personal wealth, combat skills, and reputation. But becoming a bounty hunter in *Star Wars Galaxies* won't be easy. First, a would-be Fett must demon-



strate some combat prowess; the life of a bounty hunter is filled with conflict, and player characters must be able to hold their own in battle. Second, a bounty hunter must possess some investigative skills to find his quarry.

Once the prerequisites are met, a player can begin exploring the bounty hunter profession by selecting bounty-hunting missions from the game's mission generator. The first forays into bounty hunting will involve missions to capture non-player characters. As the bounty hunter advances in the profession, he will have access to new missions pitting him against other players.

Medic

Because combat is a reality in *Star Wars Galaxies*, medical skills will be widely available to player characters. A well-rounded medic can cure wounds on the battlefield and pick up a blaster to help out during a fight. Other types of "healers" include dancers, who can help players recover from mental fatigue at cantinas or other rest stops.

Hi Ho, Hi Ho . . .

For those players who prefer to keep their characters out of lightfights, *Star Wars Galaxies* presents numerous non-combat roles, including rancher, farmer, and miner. In fact, resources such as ores and crystals form a key component of the economy of *Star Wars Galaxies*. Players will be able to gather these resources, which can then be used to craft various items.

In order to make resource harvesting fun and challenging, the team has developed a very intricate resource spawning system. Each planet is seeded with a random assortment of resources of all types, each with its own properties. One metal might be easy to mine, but produce fragile weapons; another metal might prove difficult to extract, but provide the raw material for extremely durable weapons. Players can locate these resources—and the best spots for mining them—by using surveying skills, and then erect mining facilities to leech the valuable deposits from the game world. In many cases, a depleted resource will vanish from the game forever, although the system will then generate a replacement. Players can even discover and name resources. This system encourages miners to continually travel the game world in search of the most valuable resource deposits.



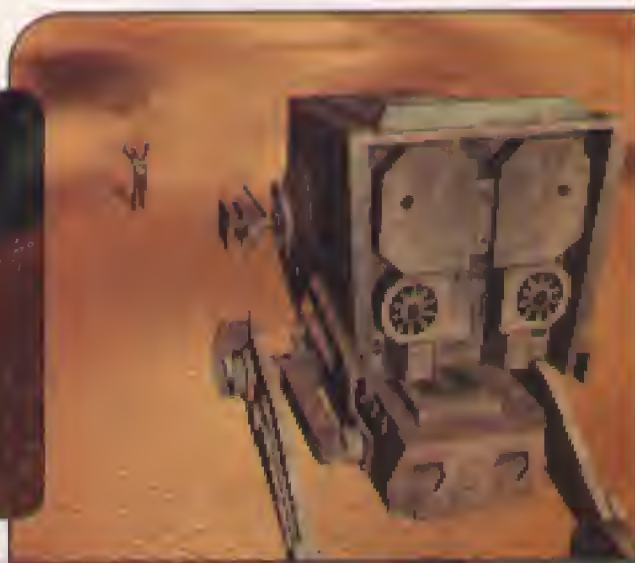
Wookiee Comb-Over

As if to prove the extent of the team's commitment to non-combat roles, *Star Wars Galaxies* is included a "hair-dressing" skill group. Hair-dressing is actually one of a handful of "alteration" skills that will allow

players to alter the appearance of other characters. During character creation, a player can assign a specific hairstyle to his character; this hairstyle can only be changed later through finding another player with hairdressing skills. As players gain skills in this profession, new hairstyles become available. A similar mechanic is used for tattoo artists and tailors.

"But I wanted to go to the Academy!"

While the designers on *Star Wars Galaxies* are working hard to create roles for nearly every type of player, they are also eager to point out that players are never locked into any one path. Unlike some other MMOs, which rely on rigid class-based systems, characters in *Star Wars Galaxies* are defined by the skills they possess. More importantly, as players advance, they can "trade in" old skills that they no longer want or use in order to acquire new skills. Even the next Boba Fett can one day trade in his Mandalorian armor for a pair of scissors . . . ☞



JEDI MIND TRICKS

The Clouded Force

A Jedi must see the world not only as it is, but as it could be. Today's lesson tests your skill at being flexible with the order of things.

On the left, the numbered clues lead to answers related to the *Star Wars* galaxy. The clues on the right, presented in random order, lead to answers that are anagrams (the same letters in a different order) of the answers on the left. Match the answers on the left to the ones on the right.



BY MIKE SELINKER
ILLUSTRATION BY
SCOTT MORSE

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. CLIMACTIC BATTLE SITE IN <i>RETURN OF THE JEDI</i> | A. FILM STUDIO EMPLOYEE WHO MAY HAVE THE WORD "EXECUTIVE" BEFORE THIS TITLE |
| 2. FURRY HUMANOID FOUND ON THE FOREST MOON OF #1 | B. PERSON WHOSE JOB IS TO TRACK DATES AND EVENTS |
| 3. PODRACER WHO COMPETED (UNFAIRLY) AGAINST ANAKIN | C. SLEAZY AND TAWDRY |
| 4. NAME OF A THE NEW JEDI ORDER FAMILY | D. GEMS, ESPECIALLY LOW-QUALITY OR FAKE ONES |
| 5. SPECIES THAT GREEDO COMES FROM (PLURAL) | E. WHERE WILE E. COYOTE GOT HIS OFTEN-FAULTY EQUIPMENT |
| 6. TERRIFYING PREDATOR THAT PREYS ON #2 ON #1 | F. CUTTING WITH A BACK-AND-FORTH MOTION |
| 7. QUADRUPEDAL GROUND VEHICLE SOMETIMES CALLED A "WALKER" | G. SUPERSPY AUSTIN |
| 8. GREEN JEDI WHO SCHOOLS LUKE | H. UNINTELLIGENT WORKER; PERHAPS A ROBOT OR A BEE |
| 9. YOUNG ACTOR JAKE WHO PLAYED ANAKIN SKYWALKER | I. MORE SURE-FOOTED, OR ONE-TIME QUARTERBACK KEN |
| 10. WHOM ANAKIN BECAME, FOR SHORT | J. BOUNCES AND VEERS AROUND, AS IN AN OUT-OF-CONTROL VEHICLE |
| 11. LARGE ACTOR DAVE, WHO PLAYED #10 | K. REFUSALS TO ADMIT WRONGDOING |
| 12. ARTOO AND THREEPIO, FOR TWO | L. MAKES A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY |
| 13. LONG-FACED ALIENS WITH TWO BRAINS AND TWO HEARTS EACH | M. COUNTRY SINGER PARTON |
| 14. SPECIES ALSO CALLED HAMMERHEADS (PLURAL) | N. COUNTRY BUMPKIN |
| 15. BRITISH ACTOR ANTHONY, THE PORTRAYER OF C-3PO | O. CAPITAL OF NORWAY |
| 16. LIGHTWEIGHT, WEDGE-SHAPED REBEL STARFIGHTERS | P. "BYE-BYE!" |
| 17. JEDI COUNSELOR WINDU | Q. GOT UP IN THE MORNING |
| 18. REPUBLIC MONEY, OR WHAT GOES BY AT THE END OF <i>STAR WARS</i> | R. WROTE A VERY POSITIVE REVIEW |
| 19. LUKE'S DOOMED AUNT | S. HARRY BELAFONTE SHOUT IN "THE BANANA BOAT SONG" |
| 20. RANGED WEAPON USED BY HAN | T. DOES WHAT LUCAS DID ON <i>STAR WARS</i> |